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AN

AMERICAN COMMENTARY

ON THE

OLD TESTAMENT

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THE  
BOOK OF PROVERBS

BY  
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# INTRODUCTION

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## I. THE DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

*A. The general question.* The view has been held by some in the past that Solomon was the author of the whole book, the names Agur and Lemuel which appear as those of authors in chap. 30 and 31 being merely descriptive designations of Solomon. This view was never very widely held and has been generally abandoned, so that it is not necessary to give it detailed consideration.

Two general views concerning the date and authorship of the book are now quite commonly held. One is that most or all of the book was written and collected in pre-exilic times, Solomon being the author of a greater or less amount, but at any rate of the kernel of the book. The other is that the book was all written and collected in *late* post-exilic times, none of it being written by Solomon. The dates assigned for the final collection of the book vary from about 350 to 180 B. C., the time of the composition of the various parts being supposed to cover about a century. Most of the recent writers on the book hold the second view. In considering this question there will be noticed, first, the arguments adduced in favor of the late date, with answers to them; and second, the arguments that may be offered in favor of the early date.

1. The arguments in favor of the late date. The arguments of this kind here considered will be chiefly those found in the recent commentaries of Wildeboer, who favors a date for the final collection of about 250 B. C.; Frankenberg, whose date is not earlier than 180 B. C.; and Toy, whose date for the completion is "in the second century B. C." These arguments are of two kinds, arguments from language, and arguments from the substance of the book, including thought and historical allusions.

(1) Arguments from language. These, without referring to the Hebrew, can only be considered in a very general way. These arguments are of three kinds: *a.* from the occurrence of some late Hebrew words; *b.* from the occurrence of some Aramaisms, or words borrowed from the Aramaic; and *c.* from the occurrence of one or two late syntactical constructions. In general answer it may be said that in a book like Proverbs, which is avowedly a compilation, unless such usages were quite numerous they would at most indicate that some verses might be post-exilic, but not that the whole book must be. Also the number of late Hebrew words and Aramaisms is much less than has sometimes been claimed, although it may be admitted that there are a few. More specifically: (*α*) In the lists of late Hebrew words are often placed those which occur outside of Proverbs only in books which are considered by some late, by others early. It is plainly illegitimate to put much dependence upon these. Even the few words which do occur only in Proverbs and in books certainly late should be used with caution. It is quite possible that they are old Hebrew words which do not occur elsewhere in the early

literature because of the scantiness of the Hebrew literature. When only a few such words are found in a book, as is the case in Proverbs, they are by no means a sure indication of lateness. (b) 31 : 1-9 is the only part of the book conspicuous for Aramaisms, there being four in these few verses. This is undoubtedly one of the latest parts of the book, and probably of foreign origin. It is also true that Aramaisms may and do occur in small numbers in books admitted to be pre-exilic; *e. g.*, the Song of Songs. (c) The syntax is almost always entirely of the classical type, and favors the early date.

(2) Arguments from the substance of the book, including thought and historical allusions. Here only the most prominent arguments will be considered. *a.* The book contains no mention of polygamy, which was so common before the exile; monogamy is assumed throughout. *b.* It contains no mention of idolatry, which was so common in pre-exilic times. *c.* There is no evidence in the historical and prophetic books of the existence of the wise before the exile, as a distinct class, like prophets and priests, as they appear to be in the book. *d.* The wise are sometimes spoken of by the prophets in pre-exilic times, to be sure, but usually in an unfavorable way, as deceivers of the people. *e.* There is no evidence before the exile of the influence of men holding such views as those found in Proverbs. If such men had been active they would have been a powerful aid to the prophets, and some distinct traces of such activity should be found in the prophetic and historical books. *f.* The philosophical conceptions of the book are thought to have been due to Greek influence, in particular the identification of knowledge and virtue which is so characteristic of the book. *g.* The book of Proverbs is claimed to recognize the existence of the Law and the Prophets as formal collections, which, it is said, could only be true after the exile. *h.* The book is claimed to show substantially the same characteristics of thought and expression, and indications of date, as the book of Ecclesiasticus, whose date was about 180 B. C.

Of these arguments, *a-c* and *e* are arguments from silence, and as such necessarily to be used with great caution. So far as the silence of the book concerning polygamy and idolatry is concerned, it is a sufficient answer to say that these matters were not in the line of the main thought of the writers of Proverbs. "The wise men took for granted the main postulates of Israel's creed, and applied themselves rather to the observation of human character as such, seeking to analyze conduct, studying action in its consequences, and establishing morality upon the basis of principles common to humanity at large. On account of their prevailing disregard of national points of view, and their tendency to characterize and estimate human nature under its most general aspects, they have been termed, not inappropriately, the *Humanists* of Israel."<sup>1</sup> This answer appears especially satisfactory when it is remembered that nearly all the subjects of greatest prominence in the rest of the Old Testament are not mentioned in Proverbs. A. B. Davidson, in "Proverbs" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," mentions some of these subjects, noting, aside from polygamy and idolatry, the importance of the ritual, priests, and all the important themes so prominent in the prophets, such as the kingdom of God, the nation as a chosen people, the Messiah, the latter day, etc. Argument *c*, the non-appearance of the wise as a distinct class before the exile, is answered by

<sup>1</sup> Driver, Introduction.

saying that in one passage they are mentioned as a recognized class along with priests and prophets (Jer. 18 : 18), and in other passages there are incidental allusions to them. Argument *d*, from the unfavorable mention of the wise by the prophets, is answered by the fact that the prophets often speak unfavorably also of the prophets. There were true and false prophets, doubtless also there were worthy and unworthy wise men. That there is no account of the influence exerted by the wise men, argument *e*, is doubtless due to the fact already mentioned, that their sphere of thought and activity was quite different from that of the prophets.

In answer to argument *f*, it is sufficient to say that the resemblance to Greek philosophy is very slight, the differences marked. If Greek philosophy had exerted its influence, one would expect a difference in the whole spirit and tone of the book. In fact it is misleading to speak of the book as philosophical at all, the element of speculation being conspicuously absent. In passages where it seems at first sight to be present, particularly in chap. 8, the treatment is that of the poet, not of the philosopher.

In answer to argument *g*, the assumed existence of the Law and Prophets as collections, it may be simply said that there is no evidence for the assumption. There is no reason to think that law in Proverbs is ever used of a written collection, not even in 29 : 18 ; see note there. It is used regularly in the earlier sense of *teaching*, by the author, by one's parents, by Wisdom, etc. It may be added, however, that even if it did mean here the Mosaic Law, most critics would think that there is a sense in which the term could be used in pre-exilic times. There is no reference at all to the existence of the Prophets as a collection of writings ; the only passage that refers to the activity of the prophets, 29 : 18, having reference not to a written collection, but to the activity and work of living prophets. The many allusions in the book to earlier writings, with no reference to formal collections, would of course have nothing to do with the question.

In answer to argument *h*, it may be said that the undoubted resemblances to Ecclesiasticus may be adequately accounted for by the familiarity of the writer of Ecclesiasticus with "the law, the prophets, and the other books of our fathers," mentioned in the prologue. On the other hand, the differences between Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus are marked. Some of these differences are the following : The conception of the wise man is entirely different. In Ecclesiasticus the wise man is simply a scribe learned in the law, and wisdom is doing the law. This appears from such passages as 19 : 20 : "All wisdom is the fear of the Lord ; and in all wisdom is the doing of the law." In Proverbs of course this conception of wisdom is not found at all. In Ecclesiasticus sacrifice and ritual are prominent and highly regarded, see especially 35 : 1-11. In Proverbs they are only alluded to, not made prominent ; sacrifices are spoken of five times (7 : 14 ; 17 : 1 ; 15 : 8 ; 21 : 3, 27), somewhat unfavorably, while the priests and the temple are never mentioned. In Ecclesiasticus the presence of the galling yoke of foreign domination is evident, see especially 36 : 1-17 ; in Proverbs there is no trace of it.

2. We turn now to some positive arguments for the pre-exilic date, of which the following may be mentioned : (1) The main teaching of the book concerning the great problem of God's government of the world is this : the good will prosper, the wicked will be punished, in this life. 12 : 21 sums up the general teaching of

the book on this point : "There shall no mischief happen to the righteous ; but the wicked shall be filled with misfortune." There is no real suggestion of doubt of this doctrine, not even in the so-called skeptical portion, 30 : 1-4. This is the pre-exilic doctrine, not the exilic nor post-exilic, when the experience of suffering through which the nation passed led to doubt of this teaching and to a deeper view of the problem. A. B. Davidson, in "Proverbs," "Encyclopædia Britannica," says : "The Proverbs appear to signalize the stage of Hebrew thought anterior to the book of Job." If there is any regularity in the development of thought among the writers of the Old Testament, which is so often, and rightly, insisted upon at the present time, the book of Proverbs must precede Job and Ecclesiastes, as well as the book of Ecclesiasticus, because in all of these books doubt of a doctrine, which is that of Proverbs, finds a prominent place. (2) There are frequent allusions in Proverbs to a king. There is no hint that he is a foreigner, as he must have been after the exile. In several passages, such as 24 : 21 (see 1 Kings 21 : 10) ; 16 : 10, 12, 13 ; and 20 : 8, 26, he is represented as righteous and promoting righteousness, which could only have been true at certain periods *before* the exile. (3) The passage already quoted, "Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint" (29 : 18), is appropriate to pre-exilic times when prophets were active, but not to a time long after the exile, when there were no prophets. (4) It is strange that no Persian or Greek words are found in the book if the collection and most of the writing belong well into the Greek period. (5) The titles which attribute portions of the book to Solomon should be allowed some weight in favor of the pre-exilic date.

For these reasons it seems exceedingly probable that at any rate the main part of the book of Proverbs, and perhaps all of it, was written in the time before the exile. The question how much of the book Solomon wrote will be discussed in the more detailed consideration.

*B. The date and authorship of the different portions of the book.* A more specific inquiry may now be made into the question of the date and authorship. The main divisions of the book are the following : Chap. 1 to 9 is a connected discourse in praise of wisdom, in the form of advice to a son or scholar ; 10 : 1 to 22 : 16 is a section attributed to Solomon in the title (10 : 1), "The proverbs of Solomon" ; 22 : 17 to 24 : 22 is a section called in 22 : 17 "the words of the wise" ; 24 : 23-34 is a similar section headed by the statement in 24 : 23, "These also are sayings of the wise" ; chap. 25 to 29 constitute another section attributed to Solomon by the title in 25 : 1, "These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out" ; chap. 30 is headed by the title in 30 : 1, "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh" ; 31 : 1-9 is described in 31 : 1 (see note there), as "The words of Lemuel king of Massa" ; the book is concluded by the beautiful alphabetic poem, 31 : 10-31, which is anonymous.

Two portions, 10 : 1 to 22 : 16 and 25 to 29, containing more than half the book, are ascribed to Solomon. It is these portions which furnish the natural starting-point for the discussion. The portion chap. 25 to 29 is ascribed to Solomon, but its collection to a commission appointed by King Hezekiah. The manner of collection of 10 : 1 to 22 : 16 is not stated or implied. The question of authorship of these two portions really resolves itself into the two related questions : Are these titles reliable ? If so, how much do they mean ? As to the re-

liability of the titles, there is no reason, as will be seen, for thinking that Solomon wrote either of them. Nevertheless, in this case it would seem that they are reliable, for three reasons: (1) If most of Proverbs is pre-exilic, a question already considered, there is no positive reason to be given why these portions should not be to some extent the work of Solomon. (2) The titles mutually confirm each other, and are further confirmed by the title in 1 : 1, and by the notice in 1 Kings 4 : 32 that Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs. Solomon's reputation as a speaker of proverbs was such that it would be surprising indeed if none uttered by him had been preserved. (3) The titles are further confirmed by the fact that the historical situation is in harmony with the time of Solomon in the whole of the first section, 10 : 1 to 22 : 16, and in a large part of the second section.

Considering now specifically the first of these two collections we ask: How much does the title in 10 : 1 mean? It seems to be evident that it does not mean that Solomon wrote down these proverbs. It is to be noticed that 1 Kings 4 : 32 does not mention that Solomon wrote these proverbs, but that he spoke them. Neither does it mean that he spoke all of these proverbs, but only that he is the author of a prominent part of them, with which the others are in general harmony. This is a common use of such titles in the Old Testament as well as in other books. The chief reasons for thinking that Solomon was not the author of all these proverbs are the following: (1) It is hardly likely that he would himself utter the proverbs concerning the king. Those of this collection speak especially of the power of the king, as in 16 : 14, 15; 19 : 12; 20 : 2; and they are always favorable rather than unfavorable, as in 16 : 10, 12, 13; 20 : 8, 26, 28; 21 : 1; 22 : 11. They may therefore have been written during the better part of the reign of Solomon, or may have been written later than his time. (2) There are many cases in which the same proverb is repeated in this collection, either with no change or with some change of special interest, which of course would hardly have been the case if Solomon had made the collection, and it is not likely that both in their present form were spoken by Solomon. Thus 16 : 25 and 14 : 12 are identical, 19 : 5 and 19 : 9 very nearly. In eighteen cases a part of the language is the same, and the thought and expression are very similar, but with noticeable changes. These are 10 : 1 and 15 : 20; 16 : 2 and 21 : 2; 10 : 2 and 11 : 4; 13 : 14 and 14 : 27; 10 : 15 and 18 : 11; 10 : 6 and 10 : 11; 10 : 8 and 10 : 10; 18 : 12, 15 : 33, and 16 : 18; 11 : 13 and 20 : 19; 12 : 14 and 13 : 2; 14 : 31 and 17 : 5; 11 : 21 and 16 : 5; 14 : 20 and 19 : 4; 16 : 28 and 17 : 9; 19 : 12 and 20 : 2; 19 : 25 and 21 : 11; 20 : 10 and 20 : 23; 21 : 9 and 21 : 19. In several of these one half is the same or nearly the same in both, the other different. In part of these the proverb in one form is antithetic, in the other not. Such is the case, *e. g.*, in 10 : 15: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city; their poverty is the destruction of the poor," and 18 : 11: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own imagination"; also in 11 : 13: "He who reveals (his own) secret purpose is a talebearer; but he who conceals a matter is trustworthy in spirit," and 20 : 19: "He who reveals (his own) secret purpose is a talebearer; therefore have nothing to do with one easily enticed as to his lips." In all these passages one form may be that of Solomon, while some one else has in each case taken a part of the thought and added to it, making a somewhat different proverb.

There seems to be no way of precisely determining how large a part of 10 : 1 to 22 : 16 belongs to Solomon. A few specific cases have been mentioned in which the Solomonic authorship seems unlikely. Some other passages of a similar kind may be found. In most cases there is no means of judging. No good reason appears for doubting, however, that a considerable portion of this section is the work of Solomon. Neither is there any direct evidence indicating when this collection was compiled. But there is no necessity for thinking of a time very much later than that of Solomon. The reign of Jehoshaphat, which has been favored by some, seems not improbable.

The second Solomonic collection, chap. 25 to 29, differs in many ways from the first. In 10 : 1 to 22 : 16 each verse is complete and independent in thought, always contains but two lines, and is usually antithetic. In chap. 25 to 29 there are frequently three lines to a verse, and often two or more verses to express a single thought, or even as many as five verses (27 : 23-27). It is not, however, a connected discourse, but a collection of independent proverbs. The antithetic parallelism is not especially prominent. It may be called comparatively, although by no means absolutely, secular in tone, containing many maxims of ordinary prudence, while 10 : 1 to 22 : 16 is more distinctly religious. There is only one case in chap. 25 to 29 of two proverbs partly identical with each other, 26 : 12 and 29 : 20; there are several, however, which are identical with some in the first collection, and some also which are similar. The presence of non-Solomonic proverbs in chap. 25 to 29 is indicated especially by the fact that when the king is spoken of it is unfavorably rather than favorably, in 28 : 15, 16; 29 : 12, 26; see also 25 : 5, 6; and also by the occurrence of passages which speak of the rise of the wicked to prominence and power (28 : 12, 28; 29 : 2, 16.) Both classes of proverbs were plainly written under a bad king. In this collection, as in the other, there is no way of telling precisely what proverbs were written by Solomon; it would seem probable that many were. As already stated, there appears no reason to doubt the statement of the title that these proverbs were collected in the reign of Hezekiah.

Of the two small collections between the two Solomonic collections, 22 : 17 to 24 : 22 and 24 : 23-34, hardly more can be said than is stated in the titles. It is evident from these that they are different collections of sayings by various wise men, collected by unknown hands. Their position in the book makes it probable that their date is quite early, so that they were added to the first Solomonic collection, 10 : 1 to 22 : 16, before the second was joined to it.

Chap. 30 and 31 are, from their position in the book, presumably later than the time of Hezekiah. The name of the author of chap. 30, Agur, is stated, but of him nothing is known. Some have doubted whether Agur is to be regarded as the author of the whole chapter, but it seems probable that that is the case. The thought of chap. 30 (see notes), is in harmony with a date not long before, or soon after, the exile; 31 : 1-9 is apparently by a foreigner, Lemuel, king of Massa. (See note on 31 : 1.) Concerning the circumstances of writing and of incorporation into the book nothing is known. The occurrence of four Aramaisms in these few verses is probably to be regarded as an indication of a date somewhat late, although they may be because of its foreign origin. The alphabetic form of the poem in 31 : 10-31 is often cited to prove the lateness of this section. But an alphabetic poem



may be early, for Ps. 9 and 10 are alphabetic, and they are generally thought to be Davidic. There is no other special mark of date in this portion. Chap. 31 may thus be exilic or post-exilic, but it probably belongs to a time soon after the exile.

There remains to be considered the connected discourse in chap. 1 to 9. It might seem that the title in 1 : 1 was intended to attribute this portion to Solomon. But that Solomon was not the author appears from three considerations: (1) The phraseology used has marked differences from that of the Solomonic portions of Proverbs. (2) The form of writing is much different, this part being a connected discourse, while the Solomonic portions consist of detached proverbs. (3) The style is elaborate and finished. The personification of wisdom especially, in chap. 1, 8, and 9, being quite unlike anything in the Solomonic portions, and, in fact, being so elaborate as probably to indicate a date later than the time of Hezekiah, and hence later than any part of chap. 10 to 29. There are, however, marked resemblances in phraseology between this portion and the first Solomonic collection, 10 : 1 to 22 : 16, which may be sufficiently accounted for by supposing the author to have been a diligent student of that collection. This portion was plainly written as an introduction to the whole book then in existence, probably chap. 10 to 29, but designed especially for the first Solomonic collection beginning with 10 : 1. The title in 1 : 1 is therefore intended to apply to chap. 10 to 29, but especially to 10 : 1 to 22 : 16, the author regarding his own work as only introductory. There is no indication of the name of the author.

It seems probable, therefore, that the different divisions of the book stand in chronological order, except chap. 1 to 9, which chronologically belongs after chap. 29. There is no real evidence as to specific details in regard to the compilation of the book, indicating by whom the different parts were put together.

## II. SOME LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK.

1. The poetical form. The book of Proverbs consists entirely of poetry. Most of the poetry is of the kind called gnomic, or poetry which is made up of sententious reflections on life and society, although some portions are lyric, especially in chap. 1 to 9. It has the ordinary characteristics of Hebrew poetry, the chief of which is parallelism. By this it is meant that a certain number of lines, usually two, have a definite relation to each other in form, the second is constructed with the first in mind, so that it is not the single line which is the unit of poetic structure, but ordinarily two lines. The three common forms of Hebrew parallelism are found in Proverbs, synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic. In synonymous parallelism two successive lines express the same or nearly the same thought in somewhat varied language, as in Prov. 2 : 11 : "Discretion shall watch over thee ; understanding shall keep thee." In antithetic, the thought of the second line is in contrast with that of the first, as in Prov. 13 : 3 : "He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life ; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." In synthetic parallelism the second line supplements or completes the thought of the first, as in Prov. 16 : 3 : "Commit thy works unto Jehovah, and thy purposes shall be established."

So far as rhythm is concerned, all that seems sure is that in lines that are related to each other there is a certain similarity in the length. As a full discussion

of this matter depends upon the Hebrew, however, it will be impracticable to do more than refer to it here. Rhyme is not a feature of Hebrew poetry; and no metre that is at all definite, like metre in English poetry, is to be observed.

While the lines are ordinarily arranged in couplets, as has been said, triplets occur as well, although much less frequently. These couplets or triplets may be combined into longer forms; thus strophes consisting of two or more of these smaller units may be found, all dealing with the same thought.

In the first division of the book, chap. 1 to 9, the parallelism is almost entirely synonymous. In the second division, 10 : 1 to 22 : 16, there are no triplets, and no strophes; each combination consists of two lines, and expresses a separate and independent thought. In chap. 10-15 the parallelism is very largely antithetic, while in the remainder of this division the synthetic is the most common form. In the third and fourth divisions, 22 : 17 to 24 : 22 and 24 : 23-34, the parallelism is very largely synthetic. In the fifth division, chap. 25 to 29, the parallelism is also largely synthetic, although with many examples of the antithetic in chap. 28 and 29. In divisions six and seven, the remainder of the book, the synthetic parallelism is the most common.

The parallelism is an important aid in interpretation. This is true especially of the synonymous and the antithetic. The assistance afforded arises chiefly from the fact that by means of parallelism a less definite word in one line may be defined by a more definite one in the other. Ordinarily the service of parallelism cannot go beyond this. It must be granted that the parallelism in Proverbs is very often not precise in form. An attempt to secure greater precision often leads to the giving of unwarranted meanings to particular words, or to arbitrary emendation of the text.

2. Other general literary characteristics. Some of these are implied in the very nature of a proverb, such as brevity and sententiousness. The frequent occurrence of antithesis is also in harmony with the proverbial form of expression. Similes and metaphors, many of which are very striking, are often employed. Especially in the first nine chapters occur also prolonged but vivid descriptions. The personification of wisdom is carried out with great skill, particularly in the eighth chapter. It is not a defect, but rather a necessity, of proverbs that they should be disconnected, and have often an appearance of monotony.

### III. THE PURPOSE AND TEACHING OF THE BOOK.

Inasmuch as Proverbs has several authors, and several compilers, it would be quite conceivable that the purpose should vary in different parts. At first sight, also, the disconnected nature of much of the book would give the impression that it consists simply of isolated observations upon life, unrelated to each other. Yet in reality a marked unity is observable upon further study. The dominant purpose is stated explicitly in 1 : 1-6, while other parts of the book serve to explain more fully the statements here made. The purpose thus stated is to teach wisdom to men, especially to the young and inexperienced, but also to those who have already some knowledge of wisdom. This is intended not only for their intellectual equipment, but for their practical guidance as well; the purpose of the book is distinctly practical.

The conception of wisdom, or knowledge, as found in the book is a comprehensive one. It is this conception which gives unity to the teachings. Wisdom is a general term for all that is desirable in character, folly for all that is undesirable. Wisdom consists fundamentally in a right relation to God; the life in accordance with wisdom is one that follows God's plan. In fact, wisdom is found in the life of God as well as of men. In wisdom are thus included all things that should be found in the highest form of life, the religious feature is dominant, the intellectual life is included, the daily life is characterized by the presence of good and absence of evil in outward acts. In brief this is stated in the text of the book, 1 : 7 : "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge."

This teaching concerning the religious nature of wisdom is the most prominent religious teaching of the book. The teaching concerning sin is also prominent. Sin is disobedience to God's commands. Sin brings punishment of various kinds, in general suffering and disaster, and often premature death. There are hints concerning a future life with rewards and punishments; see note on 11 : 7.

Of philosophical teaching or philosophical purpose in the book there is really none, although there is often claimed to be. The book, it is said, identifies virtue with knowledge. This is true, and yet this is not to be regarded as in reality a philosophical feature, but rather as a religious and practical one. For the practical purpose of the writers of Proverbs men are divided into two classes, those who know the right and do it, and those who do not know it and do not do it. The other class, so common in experience, those who know the truth and do it not, are simply ignored for practical purposes; their existence is not denied, but they are left out of consideration. Here, as elsewhere, partial or extreme statements of truth are a necessary feature of teaching by proverbs.

There is in the book really nothing of the speculative element. The teachings concerning wisdom are closely related to philosophical questions concerning the greatest good and the chief end of man. Yet these teachings are here religious, not philosophical. The conclusions from observation of men and manners are in terms of religion rather than philosophy. It is not the philosopher but the poet who speaks in the picture of personified wisdom in chap. 8; the chapter is really an expression of the thought: all God's creative activity was in wisdom.

Allusion has already been made to the consideration in the book of the great problem of God's relation to man, especially in the treatment respectively of the good and the evil. This question is not directly treated so often as it is implied. The unquestioning tone of the book on this point shows that no real problem is recognized; the teaching of the book is uniform that the good have temporal prosperity, the evil temporal adversity. This teaching is not pushed to a great extreme, however. It is recognized that there may be inequalities of fortune for both classes, the good may be poor, the wicked rich. But such conditions are regarded as only temporary.

It is not, however, simply a utilitarian scheme of life that is presented in the book. The purpose of the Proverbs "is not to bribe with offers of advantage, but to exclaim against the folly of thinking that there could be any path towards advantage except through right doing."<sup>1</sup> Often, also, the emphasis is not placed

<sup>1</sup> Moulton, "The Proverbs," in "The Modern Reader's Bible."

upon the *rewards* of right doing, but rather on the inherent *attractiveness* and *worth* of the right life.

Since proverbs in the nature of the case rest upon observation, it is only what would be expected that many here found are secular in tone, *i. e.*, not distinctly religious in their teaching. In these is merely formulated the result of observation, without the expression of any ethical judgment. This is simply because wisdom is so comprehensive that it brings all life within its scope. There is, however, nothing irreligious in these cases, the religious element is by implication fundamental. It is not correct to say that in these cases wisdom means something different from its meaning in other cases, that it means simply observation. The meaning is rather that wisdom, whose fundamental element is religious, has to do with all life, so that shrewd observations upon the phases and phenomena of life are included in its scope.

The general ethical tone of the book is very high, as high as that of any part of the Old Testament, and in some places it approximates closely to New Testament teaching. It deals largely with external acts, yet it emphasizes the fact that these are the expression of the inner life. Formalism is regarded as of no worth, the ceremonial observances are largely ignored, and when recognized it is stated that their value does not lie in the external form. This is illustrated by the teaching concerning sacrifices, which is the same as that of the prophets. (See 21 : 3, 27.) A standard very similar to that of the New Testament is found, *e. g.*, in 20 : 22 and 24 : 29, in which revenge is forbidden, and in 25 : 21, where kind treatment of enemies is enjoined.

#### IV. THE CANONICITY OF THE BOOK.

The Book of Proverbs belongs to the third division of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Writings, more often called the Hagiographa. According to rabbinical writers, the reception of the book into the canon was opposed by some on two grounds : because of the presence of contradictory statements in 26 : 4, 5 ; and because of too great vividness in the description of 7 : 7-20. But no great difficulty was apparently caused by these matters, and no doubt of its canonicity has been felt in Christian times.

There certainly seems to be no reason for objecting to the canonicity of the book. Its teachings, as already noted, are pure and lofty, and some of them are embodied in the New Testament teachings. It seems to be often supposed that the inspiration of the book is of a lower order than that of the writings of the prophets. No reason appears, however, for that supposition. A particular message is not stated to be the word of Jehovah, as in the preaching of the prophets. But there are many passages which state or imply divine authority for the teachings, and in some passages there is direct identification of these teachings of wisdom given by the sages as the word of Jehovah. The message from Jehovah simply comes in a different way from that of the prophetic message, so that the element of observation, never entirely absent, enters somewhat more explicitly. There is no ground for thinking of any lower degree of inspiration in the book of Proverbs than in other Old Testament books. There seems no reason for question as to the *fact* of a revelation made in this book, although its *method* is somewhat different from that of the revelation made to and through the prophets.

## V. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

a, b, c, etc.,	1st, 2d, 3d, etc., line of a verse.
Aq.,	Aquila.
A. R. V.,	American Revised Version.
A. V.,	Authorized Version.
G.,	Septuagint.
MT.,	Masoretic Text, the Hebrew text with points.
R. V.,	Revised Version, Canterbury.
S.,	Peshitta.
Sym.,	Symmachus.
T.,	Targum.
Th.,	Theodotion.
V.,	Vulgate.

The Commentaries chiefly referred to are designated as follows : Chajes, "*Proverbia-Studien zu der sog. Salomonischen Sammlung*," 16, von Dr. H. P. Chajes ; Fr., "*Die Sprüche übersetzt und erklärt*," von Lic. W. Frankenberg, ("*Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*") ; Str., "*Die Sprüche Salomos übersetzt und ausgelegt*," von D. Hermann L. Strack, ("*Kurzgefasster Kommentar zu den heiligen Schriften Alten und Neuen Testaments*") ; Toy, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs," by Crawford H. Toy, ("*The International Critical Commentary*") ; Wi., "*Die Sprüche erklärt*," von D. G. Wildeboer, ("*Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament*"). Other abbreviations will probably be intelligible without explanation.



# PROVERBS

**Chap. 1.** The first division of the book of Proverbs consists of chap. 1 to 9. There has been much difference of opinion concerning the division of these chapters. Some of the views may well be mentioned. Str. finds a connected line of thought throughout chap. 2 to 7, as follows: (1) 2 : 1-11, a general exhortation to strive after wisdom, which thought is expanded in 3 : 1-26; (2) 2 : 12-15, wisdom delivers from perverse ways and from the ways of perverse men, expanded in two passages, 3 : 27 to 4 and 6 : 1-19; (3) 2 : 16-19, wisdom delivers from destructive intercourse with adulteresses, expanded in the two passages chap. 5 and 6 : 20 to 7; (4) 2 : 20-22, positive blessings conferred by the possession of wisdom. In favor of the analysis he refers not only to the connection of thought, but also to the use of language in the various passages. There is, however, this decided objection to be urged against it, that the connection of thought is not sufficiently close to warrant classing the passages together. Division (3) is the only one in which the connection of thought is close. In division (2) there are several difficulties: 3 : 27-30 are not connected in thought with 2 : 12-15; 4 : 1-13, especially 1-9, are not connected in thought with 2 : 12-15, but rather with 2 : 1-11; 6 : 1-19 are not connected *closely* with 2 : 12-15, 6 : 1-11 not at all. More in accordance with the facts is the statement of Fr. that in 1 : 7 to 9 two themes are treated: (1) warnings against temptation through the success of the wicked; (2) warnings against temptation through the flattering speech of adulteresses. (1) is stated in 2 : 12-15, and is especially prominent in chap. 1 to 4; (2) is stated in 2 : 16-19, and is especially prominent in chap. 5 to 7; but there are many breaks in the thought, especially in (1). He regards 6 : 1-19 as a later insertion. There is much force in the statements of Fr. It seems evident that the chief subjects treated are the two mentioned by him. They cannot be made the basis of a complete analysis, however, of this part of the book. Evidently no analysis can be made in which a definite progress of thought can be traced through the whole of this

part of the book. All that can be done, therefore, is to recognize the chief divisions, and observe the subject of each one, without co-ordinating these entirely into a unity. The general divisions of thought are: chap. 1 : 1; 1 : 2-6; 1 : 7; 1 : 8-33; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6 : 1-19; 6 : 20 to 7; 27; 8 : 1 to 9 : 18. This division is similar to that given by Kamphausen and adopted by Wi. The subjects of these divisions, as well as the subdivisions, will be indicated in connection with each.

Analysis of chap. 1. There are four main divisions: 1. Ver. 1, the title of the book. 2. Ver. 2-6, introductory statement giving the purpose of the book. 3. Ver. 7, the text of the book. 4. Ver. 8-33, exhortation not to yield to the temptations of evil men, but to follow the counsels of wisdom. The last may be subdivided: (1) Ver. 8, 9, exhortation to obey parents, for their counsel is good; (2) ver. 10-19, warning against yielding to the temptations of evil men; (3) ver. 20-33, personified wisdom threatens punishment for the wicked and exhorts to the observance of her precepts. The connection of thought of ver. 10-19 may be thus summarized: Ver. 10 is a general admonition from the writer to the reader to avoid temptation from sinners. Ver. 11 introduces a specimen of such temptations. It is in form an invitation to join in committing murder, in reality an invitation to join a band of robbers, with whom murder is an incident. Ver. 12-14 present the arguments for the acceptance of the invitation of ver. 11: ver. 12, there is certainty of success; ver. 13, 14, there are financial advantages necessarily accruing. Ver. 15 introduces the conclusion to the condition begun in ver. 11, an exhortation from the writer to the reader to refrain from them entirely. The reason for ver. 15 is given in the statement of ver. 16, they may seek to disguise the fact, but their ways are evil, they are really murderers. Ver. 17, 18 state that this will surely bring disaster; they persist in evil in spite of the fact that the resulting disaster is so plainly in sight, but their own lives will pay the penalty. Ver. 19, the general conclusion of the

## CHAPTER I.

1 THE Proverbs of Solomon the Son of David, king of Israel;

2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

1 THE proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

2 To know wisdom and instruction;

To discern the words of understanding;

3 To receive instruction in wise dealing,

In righteousness and judgement and equity;

4 To give subtilty to the simple,

To the young man knowledge and discretion:

writer from the preceding. The connection of thought of ver. 20-33 may be summarized: Ver. 20, 21, wisdom is personified and introduced as speaking in the city. Ver. 22, 23, the fools are invited to turn to wisdom and become wise. Ver. 24-28, rejection of such invitations will result in the coming of days of disaster in which they will apply to wisdom for help and be refused. Ver. 29, 30, reason for the refusal. Ver. 31, further statement of the evil consequences. Ver. 32, 33, statement of the general principle: rejection of wisdom brings disaster, even death; acceptance brings prosperity.

1. Although the title, see Introduction, this verse is closely connected with the following verses, as is shown by the fact that grammatically they belong with it. **Proverbs.** The Hebrew word so rendered, מִשְׁפָּל, *māshāl*, is one concerning whose general meaning and original force there is much difference of opinion. The probability is, however, that the original meaning of the verb from which it is derived, מִשַּׁל, *māshāl*, is to be like. This may be inferred with approximate certainty from the fact that it is the meaning found in a few examples in the Hebrew, and is the only meaning found in the same verbal root in the Arabic, Ethiopic, Aramaic, and Assyrian. The meaning *stand for, represent*, given as the original meaning in Ges.-Buhl<sup>13</sup>, B. D. B., and elsewhere, is not so probable as the one just mentioned, because it is only found in a derived stem of the Arabic, and can easily have come from the other meaning. The fundamental meaning of the noun is therefore *likeness*. By B. D. B. the word has been thought to refer simply to the parallelism of clauses, and by Toy to be a description of all poetry as "made by the juxtaposition of related ideas," but both these explanations seem too superficial, and fail to account for the fact that the word is seldom if ever used simply to describe poetry as such. König ("*Stilistik*," p. 80 f.), starting from the original meaning of *likeness* or *identity*, considers the meaning of the word to be *sentence, or combination*, so that it is applicable to almost any kind of sentence. This also is open to the objection that such a general meaning of the

word seems strange in view of its very limited use. The obvious view is the common older one, that by *likeness* is meant a *comparison*. That the meaning has been broadened considerably beyond this in use is natural, more natural, in fact, than the limitation of meaning assumed by many. The common meanings of the word, then, in their probable order of development, are as follows: (1) *A comparison*, referring to such as are found in Prov. 10 : 26; 16 : 24. (2) *A parable*, which involves the element of comparison, as in Ezek. 17 : 2; 20 : 49; 24 : 3; (3) *An aphorism, a proverb*. Since these often contained comparisons, it was natural that the meaning of the word should be broadened so as to include them. The proverbs may be of a popular nature or not. (4) It is also broadened still further and used of longer *poems* or *discourses*, which yet are similar to proverbs in being sententious or enigmatical, as in Num. 21 : 27; 23 : 7; Isa. 14 : 4. It is interesting to note that the word rendered *parable* in the New Testament has a similar derivation and range of meanings. The meaning in this verse is (3), which is the only meaning found in the book of Proverbs, the other passages where it occurs being 1 : 6; 26 : 7, 9; 10 : 1; and 25 : 1; the last two in titles.

2-4. **To know.** The infinitives in ver. 2-4 are dependent on ver. 1, and need something supplied to bring out the meaning in English, which is, the proverbs of Solomon are given in order that one may know, etc. The subject of the infinitive "to know" is indefinite, but refers to those intended to be instructed by the proverbs; the implied subject is the same throughout ver. 2 and 3. 4. Here there is a change of subject, the subject of "to give" being the proverbs of ver. 1. **Simple** really means *inexperienced*; this may be in a good sense, unacquainted with evil, as in Prov. 21 : 11; Ps. 19 : 7; 119 : 130; more often in a bad sense, easily led astray, see especially Prov. 9 : 16. Here it is in a good sense. It is especially appropriate to the young, who are shown by the parallelism to be meant here. **The young man, better, a young man.** This indicates that the collection of proverbs was intended especially



5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels;

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:

5 That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning;  
And that the man of understanding may attain unto sound counsels:

6 To understand a proverb, and a figure;  
The words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:

But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father,

And forsake not the law of thy mother:

9 For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head,

And chains about thy neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice thee,

Consent thou not.

11 If they say, Come with us,

Let us lay wait for blood,

Let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause;

for those who are young and, as a shows, inexperienced. 5. Render: *Let a wise man hear and increase in learning, and let a man of understanding attain unto sound counsels.* This is the natural and literal rendering. It is to be regarded as parenthetical, indicating that the proverbs are not intended exclusively for the young, but contain an exhortation to the older who are already wise to profit by them as well. 6. To understand is to be connected not with ver. 1, but with ver. 2-4, the subject being the same. The *understanding* of ver. 6 is the result of the instruction of ver. 2-4. **Figure** probably means an enigmatical saying. **Dark sayings**, literally *riddles*, here probably a saying more or less obscure; it may be rendered *apothegm*.

7. **The fear of the Lord** (*Jehovah*).<sup>1</sup> This evidently means the fear of man toward Jehovah; the same phrase in Ps. 111 : 10; Prov. 9 : 10; similar in Job 28 : 28. **Beginning**. The Hebrew word sometimes means that which is first in *value*, the most important. Here, however, the meaning is shown to be first in *time*, beginning, by the very similar verse 9 : 10, where another word is used which must have the latter meaning. Ps. 111 : 10 has the same thought, which is expressed somewhat more strongly in Job 28 : 28. This verse shows the meaning of wisdom in the writer's mind; it is not simply philosophy or speculation, but includes necessarily a religious element. This is true in the usage of Proverbs as a whole, and to some extent in the general Old Testament usage.

8. Nearly identical with 6 : 20. **My son**. This does not indicate relationship, but is the address of the writer as a teacher to a learner supposed to be young. It thus connects itself with ver. 4. The phrase affords no reason for supposing, however, as some have done, that

there were formal schools in the time of the writer in which wise men taught. It is more naturally merely an indication of the literary form chosen, that of the instruction of a teacher to young men. **Law**. The Hebrew word here used, לְוַיָּוֶן, *lōvā*, had originally the meaning *direction*. From this came the similar meaning *teaching*, which was afterward given the specific meaning *law*. Here the meaning is not *law*, but *teaching*, as the connection shows, which should be the translation. The word should be so translated also in all the other passages in which it occurs in Proverbs, viz, 3 : 1; 4 : 2; 6 : 20, 23; 7 : 2; 13 : 14; 28 : 4, 7, 9; 29 : 18. See note on last passage. 9. **Chaplet** means wreath, garland, as of flowers. **Of grace** means *graceful, delightful*. The same word is rendered *pleasant* in 5 : 19 and *precious* in 17 : 8. **Chains**. The Hebrew word occurs elsewhere only in Judg. 8 : 26; Cant. 4 : 9, and in both passages, as here, means an ornamental chain. In both clauses of ver. 9 the thought is that this teaching is an adornment, *i. e.*, to the inner man. See similar thought and phraseology in Prov. 3 : 22, and similar phraseology with a somewhat different thought in 3 : 3; 6 : 21. 10. **Sinners**. This is the general term, but the following context shows that robbers and murderers are chiefly in mind. 11. **Lay wait for blood**. The phrase can only naturally refer to *murder*. All the verses following show that robbery for gain was the object; murder does not appear as designed except in the comments of the writer, ver. 16-19. If the robbers wished to make a plausible showing to an inexperienced youth, it seems strange that they should make murder the first thing to be mentioned. The words **without cause** in c are even more obviously inappropriate in the mouths of the robbers. Hence, in these statements it seems evident that we have,

<sup>1</sup> In cases like this the rendering in parenthesis is that of the A. R. V.

12 Let us swallow them up alive, as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:  
 13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:  
 14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:  
 15 My son, walk thou not in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:  
 16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.  
 17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird:

12 Let us swallow them up alive as Sheol, And whole, as those that go down into the pit;  
 13 We shall find all precious substance, We shall fill our houses with spoil;  
 14 Thou shalt cast thy lot among us; We will all have one purse:  
 15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; Refrain thy foot from their path:  
 16 For their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood.  
 17 For in vain is the net spread, In the eyes of any bird:

not the actual language which the robbers are supposed to use, but their language interpreted by the writer and put in a way that expresses their real spirit and corresponds to the actual facts. They were really robbers, but murder when necessary as an incidental part of the plan was looked upon with complacency. The existence of such bands of robbers shows lawless conditions in the time of the writer, but is not a definite indication of date, for there must have been many times in the city life of Israel when such conditions were found. **12.** The chief problem here is to ascertain the point of the comparison, in what respect the contemplated action is like that of sheol or the pit. Num. 16 : 30, 33, and Ps. 55 : 15 are sufficient warrant for saying that sudden death was sometimes described as going down alive to sheol. Hence, it might seem to be a natural meaning here, we will swallow them up alive, as sheol does in cases of sudden calamity. The chief difficulty with this view, however, is that such cases are decidedly exceptional, while in both clauses of the verse there is no indication that anything but the usual order of events is in mind. Hence, it seems better to regard the comparison as having reference directly to **swallow**, and to the words **alive** and **whole** only by way of contrast. The word translated swallow, in the simple stem used here, does not in itself mean to destroy, although that may be implied. In the figurative use of the word, the idea most naturally prominent is the completeness of the possession gained. This is the thought in Ps. 69 : 15; Jer. 51 : 34; Ps. 124 : 3, and is to be accepted here. Sheol is sometimes personified as an insatiable, devouring monster, as in Isa. 5 : 14; Hab. 2 : 5; Ps. 141 : 7; Prov. 27 : 20, and 30 : 16. Many other passages speak of the power of sheol, its secure grasp on all within its reach. Here, then, the thought is: We will gain complete possession of them, hold them in our grasp as firmly as does sheol. But they shall come into our power alive and sound, which is in contrast with the usual condition of those in sheol. This is introduced probably to show that the prominent object is robbery, not

murder. **Let us.** Render: *We will*, for it is evident from what has been said that the thought is not of exhortation, but of encouragement. It is not an exhortation to murder, but is rather encouragement to robbery by showing the sureness of the outcome. **13. We shall find, better: We shall get.** **All** means all kinds of. **14a** is designed as a tempting offer. The newcomer is to be put on an equality with the others, although they had been associated together before. It means that he should cast his lot for his share of the plunder, not simply in one particular raid, but in general. **B** expresses the same thought, not communism, without division, but an equal share in the division. **16.** The verse is identical with Isa. 59 : 7a, except that here a word is added at the beginning, and there one at the end. The appropriateness of the verse in its connection is obvious in Isaiah, but it is not quite so obvious here. Consequently many have concluded to omit it here as a scribal addition from Isaiah. There is no sufficient reason, however, for its omission. It is rather to be regarded as a quotation from Isaiah by the author here, or else the reverse. **A** is similar to 6 : 18b. What has been said on ver. 11 suggests a natural reason for the presence of the verse here. The robbers emphasize the gain of the robbery, they pass lightly over the bloodshed involved. This verse is designed to call attention to the real facts. **A** mentions that not simply gain is involved, but evil-doing. **B**, more strongly, that murder is really a prominent part of their plans. From this ver. 17-19 go on to speak of the results of their conduct viewed thus in reference to its real nature. **17. In vain.** The natural meaning would seem to be: It is in vain that one attempts to catch birds by spreading a net in their sight, for they will take warning and keep away from it. But this interpretation, although it has been held by many, is generally conceded to be contrary to the facts. Birds are often caught in such a way. It is necessary, therefore, in accordance with the facts, to regard these words "in vain" as used from the standpoint of the birds, not of the hunters; from their standpoint it is

18 And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.

19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets;

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

18 And these lay wait for their own blood, They lurk privily for their own lives.

19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain;

It taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

20 Wisdom crieth aloud in the street;

She uttereth her voice in the broad places;

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse;

At the entering in of the gates,

In the city, she uttereth her words:

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?

And scornors delight them in scorning,

And fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof:

Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you,

I will make known my words unto you.

in vain, for they do not heed the warning. 18. The first interpretation mentioned for ver. 17 would make this verse in contrast with it, the one adopted makes the thought one of similarity. The connection of thought is: Just as the bird is not warned by seeing the net, but is attracted by the bait and rushes on, so these sinners go on, even though it is plain that they are injuring themselves. The verse manifestly alludes to ver. 11, the language used being almost identical. This indicates that their plans in reference to others shall recoil on their own heads. 19. Similar thought in 15 : 27, contrasted thought in 28 : 16. This verse draws the general lesson from the preceding. **Every one that is greedy of gain** is inadequate; *every one that gets unjust gain* is better. It does not indicate greed simply, but greed that acts unjustly, one form of which is robbery, just mentioned. **The owners thereof**, those who have it as their prominent characteristic. **B** does not indicate the specific application intended. It is probable, therefore, that we are to regard the verse as general. It does not indicate that justice will overtake the robber in any specific way, by legal punishment or otherwise. It rather gives the assurance that in some way or other such punishment will come, that in some way the life of such a man will pay the penalty. This is in harmony with the general teaching of Proverbs that an early death is a punishment for sin. This verse also indicates that the controlling motive in the acts mentioned in the preceding verses is excessive and unjust greed.

20. Wisdom is personified as a woman, the personification continuing through the chapter. The tenses in ver. 20, 21 may be frequentative, stating what wisdom is in the habit of doing. It seems more probable, however, that a personification would have in mind one event rather than a series, so it is better to regard the tenses as the equivalent of the present.

The fact that a quotation follows is also more in harmony with this idea. The tenses in 8 : 1-3 are probably the same as here. The question is, of course, not one of fact, as this is personification, but of conception and representation. This is supposed to be a specimen incident in the activity of personified wisdom. **Broad places.** The phrase may mean broad streets, but more usually squares, open places. **21. In the chief place of concourse**, better in the literal rendering: *at the head of the noisy streets*. It probably means at the intersection of busy streets; see "where the paths meet," in 8 : 2. Ver. 20, 21 do not give, then, merely different descriptions of the same place. Ver. 20 and this phrase in ver. 21 refer to different places best suited for public audience in the streets about the city, while **At the entering in of the gates** designates the square at the entrance of the city, the common meeting-place. **In the city.** If this phrase modifies the preceding, at the entrance of the gates, it would simply mark that place as being inside the gates, not outside. But that seems unnecessary, as it would be the obvious implication. It therefore seems better to regard the words, as is usually done, as being an additional statement, summing up all the preceding, expressed without a conjunction. The same form of expression is found in 2 : 9 and 8 : 16. Wisdom is described as making a trip about the city, speaking at various places and at one time using the words of ver. 22 f., which would be substantially the same as those used at the other places. **22. Simple ones**, here in an unfavorable sense. **Scornors . . . scorning** (*scoffers . . . scoffing*); the rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. These make religion and morality, in connection with which the words are generally used, subjects for scoffing. Both words are rare outside of Proverbs. The changes of person in this verse and the following are such as are not uncommon. **23.** This is a sentence virtually

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;  
 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof;  
 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;  
 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.  
 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:  
 29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:  
 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof:  
 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.  
 32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.  
 33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused;  
 I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;  
 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel,  
 And would none of my reproof:  
 26 I also will laugh in the day of your calamity;  
 I will mock when your fear cometh;  
 27 When your fear cometh as a storm,  
 And your calamity cometh on as a whirlwind;  
 When distress and anguish come upon you.  
 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer;  
 They shall seek me diligently, but they shall not find me:  
 29 For that they hated knowledge,  
 And did not choose the fear of the Lord:  
 30 They would none of my counsel;  
 They despised all my reproof:  
 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way,  
 And be filled with their own devices.  
 32 For the backsliding of the simple shall slay them,  
 And the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.  
 33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell securely,  
 And shall be quiet without fear of evil.

conditional without the conditional form: If you turn . . . Behold, I will, etc. **26.** Laughter in the Old Testament is not an indication simply of amusement. Here it is the laughter of mockery, which is a common usage and here favored by the context. **Fear** should be *terror*, a stronger word than fear, so in ver. 27a. **27.** 3 · 25 is similar. **Whirlwind.** The word means properly a destructive storm-wind. **28.** An evident allusion to ver. 24, the language being similar. **Diligently** should probably be omitted. Is it the representation here that these men repent of their evil and yet find no mercy when they turn unto wisdom? Manifestly not; plainly there is no thought of repentance. Rather their cry is in time of trouble, as shown by ver. 26, 27, and is simply for deliverance from the evil consequences of their deeds, as indicated especially by ver. 31, 32. In fact, the common thought of Proverbs is of a certain fixity of character; when a given course has been followed persistently for a long time there is no thought of real change of character, a hardened sinner continues to be such under all circumstances. Of course, this is a partial and extreme view, yet it presents a side, and a very important side, of truth. It is to be remembered that it lies in the very nature of the case that the book of Proverbs, dealing largely in generalizations, should ordinarily present only one side of a case; for the sake of practical effectiveness in the presentation of truth such a course was often necessary. Ver. 29, 30 give the reason for ver. 28. **31.** This verse continues the thought of ver. 28; **therefore** would be better rendered *and*, which is literal. Ver. 29, 30 are really parenthetical.

**32. Backsliding**, perhaps better, *apostasy*. It means the turning away from wisdom. **Simple**, here in a bad sense. For this word and **fools** pronouns might here have been used. The nouns are used for the sake of added clearness, and also add a certain emphasis. **Prosperity of**, *careless ease*. This implies forgetfulness of God. **33. Quiet**, better, *untroubled*.

**Chap. 2.** The thought of the chapter: The blessings conferred by wisdom on those who follow its teachings. The blessings named are: The understanding of the fear of Jehovah and the consequent protection, the understanding of wisdom and the consequent protection, deliverance from the way of evil men, deliverance from destruction through adulteresses, and attainment of right ways. More in detail the thought is as follows: Ver. 1-4 contain a series of conditional clauses, all of which express one condition, the diligent pursuit of wisdom. Ver. 5-8 form the first conclusion to this condition; ver. 5 states it in general, the result is the understanding of the fear of Jehovah; ver. 6 gives the reason for ver. 5, Jehovah gives wisdom; ver. 7, 8 continue ver. 5, 6, stating that Jehovah gives protection to those who fear him. Ver. 9-11 form a second parallel conclusion in terms of wisdom; ver. 9 gives the general result, the understanding of wisdom; ver. 10, 11 describe the resulting protection. This protection of ver. 10, 11 is amplified in the first statement, ver. 12-15, it is deliverance from evil and evil men; it is further amplified in the second statement, ver. 16-19, it is deliverance from adulteresses, adulteresses being described in ver. 16, 17, their effects in ver. 18, 19; it is amplified yet again in the third state-

## CHAPTER II.

1 MY son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;  
 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;  
 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;  
 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;  
 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.  
 6 For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh cometh knowledge and understanding.  
 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

1 MY son, if thou wilt receive my words,  
 And lay up my commandments with thee;  
 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom,  
 And apply thine heart to understanding;  
 3 Yea, if thou cry after discernment,  
 And lift up thy voice for understanding;  
 4 If thou seek her as silver,  
 And search for her as for hid treasures;  
 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,  
 And find the knowledge of God.  
 6 For the Lord giveth wisdom;  
 Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding;  
 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the upright,  
 He is a shield to them that walk in integrity;

ment, ver. 20, it is the attainment of right ways; ver. 21, 22 give the general conclusion from all these results.

Some, as Toy, have thought that ver. 5-8 should be omitted as a later insertion, apparently because they dwell upon the fear of Jehovah, while the rest of the chapter presents merely prudential considerations. This is, however, no reason for omission, because it is always understood and often asserted in some form that wisdom includes the fear of Jehovah. Further, it seems plain that the two sections 5-8 and 9-11 are intentionally parallel; in the former a prominent blessing resulting from the pursuit of wisdom is knowledge and fear of God with consequent prosperity and protection; in the latter a similar blessing is presented as knowledge of wisdom and consequent prosperity and protection. Thus knowledge of God and knowledge of wisdom are presented side by side, so as to suggest their close connection; that they are practically identical, see the explicit statement of ver. 6a, and the same teaching in 1:7 and 9:10. Ver. 9 is closely parallel to ver. 5, and ver. 11 to ver. 8.

1. 7:1 is very similar. The speaker is now not wisdom, but the author. 2. **Heart.** The metaphorical use of this word in the Hebrew, לֵב, *lēbh*, also לֵבָב, *lēbhābh*, is not the same as in English, although the English versions usually retain it where it appears in the Hebrew, in most cases contrary to English usage. The principal meanings of the word are as follows: (1) the whole inner man, the invisible part of man; (2) the mind, intellect; (3) the will; (4) the moral character; (5) the emotions, a much less common meaning than the others. These are not, however, to be regarded as entirely distinct meanings, the other meanings are all to be considered as only specializations of (1), and as often retaining somewhat of the general meaning of (1). Here the best rendering is *mind*, as is shown by the word **understanding** immediately after.

In Proverbs it will not always be necessary to specify which is the meaning to be given in a particular case, since it will be indicated by the context. 3. **Cry after.** The use of the same Hebrew phrase in Ps. 57:2 indicates that the meaning here is *call for help to*, i. e., not directly for deliverance from danger, but for help in a felt need. 4. **Search for.** The original meaning of the Hebrew word was without doubt *to dig*; it is thus a stronger word than that used in a, and especially appropriate in connection with the mention of **hid treasures**. The allusion is to the common custom in antiquity that in times of insecurity men would bury their possessions in the earth, and were often prevented by circumstances from digging them up again. These were frequently dug up by others, either by accident or design. See Job 3:21, which is a very instructive parallel to the present passage, and also Jer. 41:8 and Matt. 13:44. 5. **Then** is an indication of the conclusion, marking special emphasis. **Shalt**, render, *wilt*. **The fear of the Lord** (*Jehovah*) means reverent obedience. **Knowledge of God.** This is primarily intellectual apprehension, but it implies obedience as well. The two phrases in the two clauses are not identical, but either would to a certain extent imply the other, so that they are sufficiently similar to make the parallelism here synonymous. 6. This verse shows the necessary connection of wisdom with religion. It gives the reason for ver. 5, because wisdom comes from God; the seeker after wisdom will necessarily come to know God. Phraseology like that in b is common in the prophets, it occurs here only in Proverbs. It means that God reveals his will to men. Elsewhere wisdom appears as the revealer. There is, however, no contradiction. Rather, this passage aids in understanding the others, showing that it is God who speaks to men through wisdom. 7. **Sound wisdom.** The Hebrew word here, תְּשׁוּבָה, *tāshūbā*, is a word of the wisdom literature. It seems quite

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; *yea*, every good path.

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

14 Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;

15 Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths;

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

8 That he may guard the paths of judgement, And preserve the way of his saints.

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness and judgement, And equity, *yea*, every good path.

10 For wisdom shall enter into thine heart, And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall watch over thee, Understanding shall keep thee:

12 To deliver thee from the way of evil, From the men that speak froward things;

13 Who forsake the paths of uprightness, To walk in the ways of darkness;

14 Who rejoice to do evil, And delight in the frowardness of evil;

15 Who are crooked in their ways, And perverse in their paths:

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, Even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

certain that it is derived from a word meaning to be, so that its fundamental meaning is *true reality*. **Sound wisdom** fairly represents its meaning in many passages; but here ver. 7b and ver. 8 indicate a different meaning, *abiding success*, which should be the rendering here. The same meaning is found in Job 5:12. **Shield** is often used metaphorically for *protection*, so *e. g.*, in Gen. 15:1; Ps. 3:3; 18:2, 30; 33:20; 84:11. **8. That he may guard.** This is not the only possible rendering of the Hebrew, although by itself a natural one. This rendering would make the verse express the result of something previous, which does not seem appropriate, inasmuch as the thought expressed in ver. 8 is very similar to that in ver. 7, especially ver. 7b. Hence it is better to give the equally possible rendering: *He guards*, and in **b**, *And preserves*. This rendering regards the verse as being in form an explanation of ver. 7, but in reality co-ordinate, a continuation of the same thought. **Saints.** This means *pious or godly*. The root idea is not *holy*, but *kind*, which in use has become broadened so as to mean *pious*. **10. For** is usually supposed to assign the reason for ver. 9. The difficulty is, however, that the meaning of ver. 10 is very similar to that of ver. 9, and also ver. 11 is not suitable as a reason. It seems better, therefore, with **Fr.**, to translate *when*, which is equally possible. Thus ver. 10 is the condition and ver. 11 the conclusion, and the verbs in ver. 10 should be rendered as presents. Render: *When (or if) wisdom enters into thy mind, And knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; (Then) discretion shall watch over thee*, etc. **12. To** expresses result rather than purpose. The verse is closely connected with ver. 11, and expresses the result of the protecting activity of wisdom. **From the way of evil, from the men**, render: *From an evil way, from men*. The two clauses of the verse speak of two similar things, an evil way

in the abstract, evil men in the concrete. **Froward** (*perverse*), the rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. **13.** Omit the definite article in both members. **Darkness** is here put in contrast with **uprightness**, while its proper antithesis would of course be light. But such use of figurative language is common in the Old Testament. "Darkness" here is probably a general expression for evil (see Isa. 5:20), rather than suggestive of any more specific meaning. **Upright** is really *straight*, its proper antithesis being **crooked** (ver. 15). **14. Frowardness** (*perverseness*), the rendering of the A. R. V., is the better. **15.** The rendering of the R. V. is not a natural rendering of the Hebrew text as it stands, which is given rather by the A. V. It is to be noticed, however, that this rendering makes the form of expression different in the two members, which is unnatural. Various changes of text have been proposed; the simplest is the omission of one consonant in **b**, reading מַעֲלֹתַי, *ma'elothai*, which is favored by all the versions except Aq. and Th., and is therefore to be accepted. The verse is then to be rendered: *Whose ways are crooked, and whose paths are wayward*. **16.** In phraseology and in meaning the verse is closely parallel to ver. 12. A second result is here introduced, very similar the first. **The strange woman . . . the foreigner**, render: *A strange woman. . . a foreign woman*. Both words, זָרָה, *zārā*, and נֹכְרִיָּה, *nōkhrīyā*, are used here with practically the same meaning, viz, *harlot*. This is a meaning peculiar to Proverbs. Aside from the present passage, the former word is used with this meaning in Prov. 5:3, 20; 22:14 (the only Solomonic passage), and the latter in 5:20; 6:24; 23:27 (in this passage parallel with the usual word for *harlot*). Various explanations are given of the origin of this meaning. The one perhaps most commonly accepted is that it is used to designate her as the wife of another, stranger here meaning not one

17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

17 Which forsaketh the friend of her youth, And forgetteth the covenant of her God :

18 For her house inclineth unto death, And her paths unto the dead :

of another *nation*, but of another *family*, an allowable use of the Hebrew words. In favor of this origin of the meaning is urged the undoubted fact that the women thus designated are in Proverbs usually, if not always, married. If this explanation were the true one, however, it would seem that the words must be used to call special attention to the wickedness of the *woman*, because she is a member of another family, *i. e.*, married; or else to emphasize the contrast between this woman, who is *not* of the family of the man who sins with her, and his own wife, who *is* of his family. Against the first explanation is the fact that while the sin of the woman in committing adultery is recognized, no emphasis is put upon it. The warnings are addressed uniformly to the man, the sin of the woman upon which emphasis is placed is that of leading astray the man by her depravity. Against the second explanation is the fact that in only one passage, 5 : 15, 18-20, is any emphasis put upon the fact that the man is married. Usually he is not said to be married. The emphasis from his standpoint is generally placed not upon the fact of adultery, but rather upon the certainty that the evil consequences will follow as the punishment of a dissolute life. It is evident that in Proverbs, especially here and in 7 : 5-21, married women are described as engaged in active solicitation, so that practically they could be designated as harlots. That no marked difference in meaning between a harlot and an adulteress was thought of is indicated by the parallelism in 6 : 26, and also by the phrase in 7 : 10b. It seems better, therefore, to adopt another fairly common explanation, and regard the usage as having arisen from the common meaning of the words here used, *stranger, of another nation*. It would then acquire the present meaning, it is supposed, because the depraved women in Israel were largely foreigners. When it had obtained this meaning, however, it would not be limited simply to foreigners; but would be used as practically equivalent to the word harlot. This explanation does not make it necessary, therefore, to suppose that as used in Proverbs it always designates foreigners; usually there is no specific indication in the circumstances. For the statement made above that probably most of these women were originally foreigners there is little direct evidence. In favor of it, however, is the

well-known fact that the depravity of the women in the nations surrounding Israel was very great; and also the fact that the *הַשְּׂרֵפָה*, *q'dhishā*, or sacred harlot, against whom the Israelites were several times warned, was distinctly a foreign institution. In favor of this explanation is also the analogy of the later Jewish usage, by which in the Talmud a harlot is called an Aramean, which is equivalent to foreigner. **Flattereth.** The meaning is probably better expressed by saying *entices*. **17. Friend.** The word means probably an intimate friend. It is used of a husband only here and in Jer. 3 : 4, where it is rendered *guide*. **Of her youth** is used as in Mal. 2 : 14, 15. **Covenant of her God.** The word "covenant" is usually supposed to refer to the marriage ceremony, as it does in Mal. 2 : 14, but only there. The added phrase "of her God" is then supposed to point to a religious ceremony in marriage, which is nowhere mentioned in the Pentateuchal regulations or elsewhere, although it is supposed to be implied in Mal. 2 : 14. The noticeable scantiness of the evidence in favor of this view makes it doubtful. It is therefore better to regard "covenant" here as having its common meaning of a covenant with God, and in fact of the great covenant of God with his people. This implies of course that, whether originally foreigner or not, this woman as residing in Palestine was an adherent of Jehovah. "The covenant of her God" would then mean, by an entirely allowable translation of the Hebrew, *her covenant with God*. The reference would be specifically to that part of the national covenant which is a command against adultery, viz, Exod. 20 : 14. **18. For** assigns the reason for ver. 16. It is not, however, the reason for the action of ver. 16, but for the *necessity* of the action. **Her house inclineth unto death.** For "inclineth" render *sinks down*, which is the literal rendering. The general meaning is clear; the precise explanation is much disputed. "House" is sometimes taken in the sense of *household*, *i. e.*, she and all belonging to her. But this is not natural in view of the parallelism, is not in harmony with the literal meaning of the verb, and is opposed to the connection of thought with ver. 19. The parallelism suggests a better view, that "house" is used in a meaning somewhat similar to *path*, *i. e.*, that the house is regarded as the entrance to a path. (See 5 : 5.) The

19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

19 None that go unto her return again,

Neither do they attain unto the paths of life :

20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, And keep the paths of the righteous.

21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, And the perfect shall remain in it.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the land, And they that deal treacherously shall be rooted out of it.

### CHAPTER III.

1 MY son, forget not my law ; but let thine heart keep my commandments :

meaning then would be, her house is the entrance to a path that sinks down to death. The thought is not of sudden destruction as the immediate punishment visited upon the sin, but rather that those who go to her house have entered upon a course which leads to death, *i. e.*, to premature death as the punishment of sin. **19. Return again**, render, *will return*; **neither do they attain**, render, *neither will they attain*. Ver. 18 speaks of the influence and result of this intercourse; ver. 19 of the impossibility that those who go in unto her should escape them, repentance, as often in Proverbs, being left out of the consideration. "Return" is not from sheol, as Toy and others regard it, but from her paths which lead to it. **Paths of life** is in contrast to "her paths" (ver. 18), and means paths which lead to continued life, long life, as do the paths of uprightness. **Go unto her**, better, *go in unto her*. A similar phrase is in common use as a technical term for sexual intercourse, and that is the natural meaning here. **20. That**. The form of expression here used in the Hebrew regularly indicates purpose, although it would not always be so expressed in English idiom. Here accordingly it is to be regarded as an expression of purpose, but purpose as existing in the mind of wisdom, which is here thought of as personified. In English that conception would not be the most natural one, so the real meaning would be better expressed by rendering it as an expression of result, *so that thou wilt walk*. The verse is closely connected in thought with ver. 11 and is closely parallel to the two sections introduced by ver. 12 and 16 respectively. There the result of the presence of wisdom is described as a two-fold deliverance from evil; here it is further described positively as the attainment of good. **21. A thought** similar to that of ver. 21, 22 is expressed in 10 : 30; see also note on 3 : 2. **The land** probably means Canaan. The thought would thus be similar to that of Exod. 20 : 12; Deut. 5 : 16; 25 : 15. **Remain**. The Hebrew word generally means not simply to remain, but

1 MY son, forget not my law ;  
But let thine heart keep my commandments :

to be left behind when others are taken away, often when others are destroyed. That may very well be the meaning here, it being used with reference to that which is to follow, the judgment upon the wicked in ver. 22. **22. Treacherous**. As the parallelism suggests, this word probably has a more general meaning here, viz, *godless*, as in Ps. 25 : 3; Prov. 13 : 2; 22 : 12. **Rooted out**. The same Hebrew word, פּוּדָה, *nāsāh*, is used as here of deportation in Deut. 28 : 63. **A** naturally refers to death, **b** to deportation. Together they express the complete opposite of ver. 21, in whatever way it might take place.

**Chap. 3.** The general thought of the chapter: Exhortation to fear God and attain wisdom, and statement of the value and blessings of wisdom. Analysis: (1) Ver. 1-12, exhortation to fear and trust God, with statement of the resulting blessings; (2) ver. 13-26, statement of the value and blessings of wisdom, with exhortation to its acquisition; (3) ver. 27-35, warning against various wrong acts. Connection of thought: Ver. 1-12 consist of six pairs of verses, in each of which the first gives an exhortation, and the second a promise consequent upon the observance of the first. In (2), ver. 13-15 state the value of wisdom; ver. 16-18, the blessings she brings are mentioned; ver. 19, 20, wisdom assisted in Jehovah's creative activity; ver. 21-26, exhortation to keep fast hold of the teachings of wisdom, then blessings will follow, especially protection from all danger. In (3), ver. 27 lays down the general principle concerning action with reference to one's fellow-men, give to each one his due; in ver. 28 this is given a particular application to money; in ver. 29 and 30 the related thought is presented, do not do evil to your neighbor; ver. 31, do not envy the man who disregards the admonition of ver. 29 and 30; ver. 32, reason for ver. 31, Jehovah's attitude; ver. 33-35, Jehovah's attitude toward the wicked and righteous respectively and its result in their lives.

1. **Law**, render, *teaching*, and see note on



2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

2 For length of days, and years of life, And peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: Bind them about thy neck:

Write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.

And lean not upon thine own understanding:

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him,

And he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes;

Fear the Lord, and depart from evil:

8 It shall be health to thy navel,

And marrow to thy bones.

1 : 8. **2.** See 2 : 21; 3 : 16; 4 : 10; and 9 : 11, where also length of days is attributed to wisdom explicitly or by implication, and 10 : 27, where it is attributed to the fear of Jehovah. See also 2 : 22 and 10 : 27, where the opposite is expressed, viz, the shortening of the lives of the wicked. See further Exod. 20 : 12; Deut. 22 : 7; Isa. 65 : 20, 22. We have expressed, then, in this verse a teaching which is often stated in Proverbs, viz, that length of life is a reward of right living and shortness of life a punishment for wrong living. There is no reason to think, with Str. and others, that life is a pregnant construction, meaning a prosperous life. That is of course implied, but there is no reason for putting any such force into the word "life" itself.

**3. Kindness and truth.** The Hebrew words occurring here are often found together; used of God, as Gen. 32 : 10; Ps. 25 : 10; 40 : 10, 11; of a king, Prov. 20 : 28; of men, Gen. 24 : 49; 47 : 29; and Isa. 16 : 5 in parallelism. Here plainly used of men, so also in 16 : 6. In 14 : 22 the statement is general. **Bind them.** This phrase may be compared with the commands of Exod. 13 : 16; Deut. 6 : 8; 11 : 18. Here **c** shows plainly that it is not to be taken literally. The thought here and in 6 : 21 is not of ornament, as in 1 : 9, but of having them constantly at hand. The form of expression may be taken from the seal-ring which was hung about the neck by a cord so as to be convenient to the hand. (See Gen. 38 : 18; Cant. 8 : 6.) **The table (tablet) of thy heart.** See similar thought and phraseology in 7 : 3; Jer. 17 : 1; 31 : 33. "Heart," render, *mind*. **4. Understanding.** The word here has been variously translated, *success, prudence, repute*, etc. The word *consideration* may be adopted as suiting both the etymology and the connection better than any other. "Understanding" is a meaning not appropriate in the connection. **5. Heart,** render, *soul*, the inner part of man in general. **Thine own understanding.** Mentioned with the implication that it is human and imperfect; the thought is similar in Jer.

9 : 23, 24; Job 10 : 4; and in Eccus. 3 : 21-24.

**6. Acknowledge.** This should probably be translated *know*, which is the general meaning, although here, as often when the object is God, it conveys also the implied idea of *reverence, worship, obey*. The meaning "acknowledge" is not appropriate with God as object nor in this connection. The meaning here given is found in many passages, such as Hosea 5 : 4; 6 : 6; 8 : 2; Job 18 : 21; Ps. 9 : 10. **He.** Emphatic in Hebrew, the emphasis of contrast, meaning *he on his part*. **Shall direct,** better, *will make smooth*. The original meaning of the word, which is sometimes retained, is *to make straight*. In usage, however, it also acquires the similar meaning *to make smooth*, and refers chiefly to the removal of obstacles from roads. It has this meaning in a figurative sense here and in 11 : 5. As thus used it has reference to ease and success rather than to guidance. In 9 : 15 and 15 : 21 it has the other meaning, *make straight*, in the latter passage being used ethically in a figurative sense. **7a** is similar to Isa. 5 : 21; Prov. 16 : 2; 26 : 12. **In thine own eyes,** *i. e.*, in thine own estimation. **Depart from evil.** This is the practical result of the fear of Jehovah. The same thought is found in 14 : 16; 16 : 6; Job 1 : 1, 8; 2 : 3; 28 : 28. **8.** Render: *healing shall be to thy body, and refreshment to thy bones*. *Body.* This rendering is obtained by following G. and S., and does not necessarily involve any change in the consonantal text, reading  $\text{לְבָרְכָהְךָ}$ , *l'shêrêkkhâ*, or  $\text{לְבִישְׁךָ}$ , *l'ish'êrêkkhâ*. It gives a good meaning, while from the MT. it is very difficult to obtain any meaning. *Refreshment.* In the two other passages where it occurs the word means drink, and here the meaning is similar. It is the watering of the bones, a token of physical well-being. It is the opposite of the drying of the bones, an expression of great distress, as in 17 : 22. There is no need to see in this verse anything more than an expression of physical well-being. It is noticeable that bones are used in the Old Testament as the important internal

9 Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding;

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.

9 Honour the Lord with thy substance,  
And with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,  
And thy fats shall overflow with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord;  
Neither be weary of his reproof:

12 For whom the Lord loveth he reproveth;

Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,  
And the man that getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver,  
And the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies:  
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand;  
In her left hand are riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness,  
And all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her:  
And happy is every one that retaineth her.

part of the body, very much as we speak of nerves. (See 12 : 4b; 14 : 30b.) **9. Honour**, used in the same way in Isa. 43 : 23, involving the meaning *give, pay*. It is used in a similar way, involving the meaning *reward*, in Num. 22 : 17, 37. **With thy substance**. Naturally a special reference to tithes. See their prominence in Gen. 28 : 22; Lev. 27 : 30 f.; Num. 18 : 21 f.; Deut. 12, 14, 26. **10**. The verse is similar to Joel 2 : 24. **New wine**. Here the juice of the grape freshly pressed and unfermented, as is shown by the connection with "vats." This is the usual meaning of the Hebrew word here employed, *תירוש*, *tirôsh*, although occasionally it indicates wine that is intoxicating; plainly so in Hosea 4 : 11, and perhaps in Judg. 9 :

13. **Fats**. The vat was the receptacle into which the juice ran and was distinct from the press in which the grapes were trodden. Both were usually excavated in the rock (see Isa. 5 : 2), the vat being lower than the press. Similar blessing is pronounced on similar grounds in Deut. 28 : 8; Mal. 3 : 10-12. **11. Be weary of**. The expression is too weak; it should be stronger than **despise of a**. Render, *have loathing for*. **12. Even as a father the son**. Render, *he afflicts a son*. This rendering follows G. and does not necessarily involve any change in the consonantal text, reading *אב*, *wakkê'êbh*, or *אב*, *yakkh'êbh*. It is to be preferred chiefly because MT. gives an awkward grammatical construction. The connection with Job (see below) would also be favorable to it. "The thought is found in Job 4, 5 (Eliphaz) and 33 (Elihu), but only here in Proverbs" (Toy). The thought and phraseology here are very similar to those of Job 5 : 17, 18; it seems evident that one is an allusion to the other. The passage here in Proverbs

would naturally be the earlier because it expresses briefly what is present in a much expanded form in Job. This is in harmony with the conclusion as to date of Proverbs in the Introduction. It is not surprising to find an isolated passage in Proverbs teaching a view that later was common and was expressed with much greater fullness. **14. The gaining of it** (A. R. V.) is to be preferred to **the merchandise of it** (R. V.). In the parallelism *the profit thereof* (A. R. V.) is to be rendered, *the acquiring of it*. The thought in both clauses is, it is better to acquire wisdom than silver or gold.

**15. Rubies**. The Hebrew word, *פנינין*, *pe'nînim*, is shown by Lam. 4 : 7 to designate something red, which excludes the old rendering, pearls. It is probable, however, that it should be rendered *corals*, which were highly esteemed in antiquity, rather than "rubies." The rendering should be the same in the other occurrences of the word in Proverbs, viz, 8 : 11; 20 : 15; 31 : 10. **B**, render: *And all of thy costly things are not equal in return for her, i. e., are not sufficiently valuable to purchase her*. Ver. 14 and 15 are very similar to 8 : 10, 11; see also 20 : 15; 16 : 16. **16**. Wisdom is here personified. If any difference is intended it is probable that the greater good is to be regarded as in the right hand. **A**, see note on 3 : 2. **B** is similar to Prov. 8 : 18a, and 22 : 4. Riches and honor are spoken of as blessings in 1 Kings 3 : 13. **17. Her ways . . . her paths**, those which belong to her, and to which she leads, as in 4 : 11. **Peace**, similar thought in Job 5 : 24; similar mode of expression in Ps. 45 : 8a. **18. A tree of life**. The same phrase is found in 11 : 30; 13 : 12; 15 : 4. (See Gen. 2 : 9; 3 : 22.) The phrase, used figuratively, means a source of life, and is used here

19 The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth ;  
by understanding hath he established the heavens.  
20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up,  
and the clouds drop down the dew.  
21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes :  
keep sound wisdom and discretion :  
22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace  
to thy neck.  
23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and  
thy foot shall not stumble.  
24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid :  
yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be  
sweet.  
25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the  
desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.  
26 For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and  
shall keep thy foot from being taken.  
27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is  
due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

19 The Lord by wisdom founded the earth ;  
By understanding he established the heavens.  
20 By his knowledge the depths were broken up,  
And the skies drop down the dew.  
21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes ;  
Keep sound wisdom and discretion ;  
22 So shall they be life unto thy soul,  
And grace to thy neck.  
23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely,  
And thy foot shall not stumble.  
24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid :  
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be  
sweet.  
25 Be not afraid of sudden fear,  
Neither of the desolation of the wicked, when  
it cometh :  
26 For the Lord shall be thy confidence,  
And shall keep thy foot from being taken.  
27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,  
When it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

of wisdom because she prolongs life. 19. The highest praise of wisdom ; it was exhibited by Jehovah in the creation of the world. The same thought is expanded in the personification of 8 : 22 f. Here there is not personification, as is shown especially in 20, the following verse, by his knowledge. The depths were broken up. The meanings assigned are various. Some consider it to be a reference to the going forth of waters from the interior of the earth to flood the earth during the process of formation. Others refer it to events like the flood (Gen. 7) ; see similarity in language. This would then be introduced to indicate that the destroying as well as the creating is from Jehovah. (See Isa. 45 : 7.) Probably, however, "were broken up" should be rendered *broke forth*, referring to the breaking forth of the subterranean mass of water in springs. "The depths" is a phrase often used of the waters under the earth. This rendering is favored by the parallelism, the thought of a is thus more in harmony with b than in any other rendering. Then a refers to a part of the creative activity of which the effects still continue, and b to a process continually repeated, in the present as well as in the past. Thus ver. 20 refers chiefly to present results of past creative activity, ver. 19 chiefly to the past creative activity in itself considered. 21. Them. The meaning is plain, and the antecedent should probably be understood to be the general idea of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in the preceding verses, rather than any specific word. Sound wisdom. See note on this word on 2 : 7. Here the present rendering is not inappropriate. B is an exhortation similar in thought to the statement of the purpose of the proverbs in 1 : 2-6. 22. Life. The word here is thought by some to include the ideas of mental and spiritual life. But it is better, in

accordance with the common meaning, to limit it simply to physical life. B, see note on 1 : 9. 23. And thy foot shall not stumble. It is better to render: *And thou shalt not dash thy foot*, as in the same Hebrew phrase in Ps. 91 : 12. In Jer. 13 : 16 a different form of the same verb, נָאֵף, *nāghāph*, is used. 24. Somewhat similar to 6 : 22b ; the contrasted idea is expressed in Deut. 28 : 66. It seems best to translate the verse, nearly with Fr., *If thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid, but thou shalt continue to rest, and thy sleep shall be sweet.* "Continue to rest" is the same word as "lie down," נָאֵף, *shākhābh*, the added meaning here comes only from the context. The meaning is: At night thou shalt not be disturbed by any form of terror, but rather shalt remain quiet, and the sleep shall be sweet. The chief argument for this rendering is that it gives a connected progressive meaning, while the rendering of the R. V. is repetitious. 25. Render a: *Thou needst not be afraid of sudden fear. Sudden fear.* (See Ps. 73 : 19.) The desolation of the wicked. This is threatened in 1 : 27. The phrase might mean either *the desolation which the wicked cause, or that which they suffer.* The latter is probably correct. It is in harmony with the general thought of Proverbs, and is also the thought suggested by such passages as 1 : 27. 26. Being taken, render: *a snare.* 27. Them, render, *him*, which is more in accordance with Hebrew idiom. Him to whom it is due, literally *its owner*, which would naturally mean here: one who has a right to it. It is commonly assumed that the verse is intended simply to refer to charity, and is designed to inculcate liberality in giving. There seems no reason, however, for the limitation, as the form of statement is general. It seems better, therefore, to give to the verse the general meaning, good being used in the com-

28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

32 For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but his secret is with the righteous.

33 The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, And to-morrow I will give; When thou hast it by thee.

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, Seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

30 Strive not with a man without cause, If he have done thee no harm.

31 Envy thou not the man of violence, And choose none of his ways.

32 For the perverse is an abomination to the Lord: But his secret is with the upright.

33 The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked;

But he blesseth the habitation of the righteous.

34 Surely he scorneth the scorners,

But he giveth grace unto the lowly.

35 The wise shall inherit glory; But shame shall be the promotion of fools.

mon sense of *benefit*. The meaning is: Withhold not any benefit from its owner, the one who has a right to it, legal or moral; be scrupulous in discharging all your obligations of every kind. **28.** This verse is more specific than the preceding, referring specifically to money. There is no reason, however, to think of charity; it is more natural to think of something due, such as wages. The verse would then be an admonition not to keep back wages, which would be similar to those found in Lev. 19: 13; Deut. 24: 15, and to the allusion in Mal. 3: 5. **29. A** is similar to 6: 14b. **Seeing**, perhaps better, *while*. **30b.** See note on 6: 14c. This verse is closely connected with the preceding; it is really a specific application of the general principle there given. **31. Violence.** J. F. McCurdy ("Biblical World," November, 1900, p. 381) would render simply *injustice*, although admitting that violence is also included. It is probable that violence is the more prominent element, so that *violence* is the better rendering. It means brutal force which regards neither divine nor human right. The connection of thought with ver. 30 is that a man of violence is one who would strive without cause. **32.** This verse is probably to be connected in thought with ver. 31; the perverse man is similar to the man of violence. **An abomination to the Lord.** This combination is found only in Proverbs and Deuteronomy. "Abomination" is something abhorrent, incompatible with the very nature of Jehovah. *Friendship* (A. R. V.) is better than *secret* (R. V.). The real meaning is probably *confidential intercourse*, which would perhaps be a better rendering. **33.** For thought, see Zech. 5: 3 f.; Mal. 2: 2. **34.** The usual understanding of a is given in the A. R. V. It is more in accordance with the usage of the Hebrew, however, to render, with König ("Syntax," § 319r): *If* (or, *When*) (he deals) *with scoffers, he scoffs*. **35.** Render: *Wise men shall possess honor, but*

*fools lift up* (i. e., obtain) *shame*. There are various views of the Hebrew, but this seems to be the most natural rendering.

**Chap. 4.** Most commentators transpose ver. 18 and 19, considering them to have been accidentally transposed in copying. This is to be accepted, for two reasons. One is that ver. 19 is closely connected with ver. 17, continuing the thought of the wicked, from which the thought naturally turns in closing the paragraph to the contrasted case of the righteous; while as it now stands ver. 18 comes in as an interruption. The other reason is that the conjunction "but," ], *w<sup>e</sup>*, at the beginning of ver. 18 is natural as marking contrast with ver. 19 if that precedes, but is unnatural as it stands, while the absence of a conjunction with ver. 19 is also unnatural as it stands.

The general thought of the chapter: Exhortation to hold fast to wisdom and warning against any form of evil, especially violence. Analysis: (1) ver. 1-9, exhortation to get and keep wisdom; (2) ver. 10-27, warning against evil and evil men: (a) ver. 10-19, especially against violent men; (b) ver. 20-27, against any deviation from the right path. Connection of thought: In (1), ver. 1 is an exhortation to heed the words of the author for two reasons: ver. 2, they are good; ver. 3, 4a, the writer has profited from similar teachings given by his father. Ver. 4b-9 give these teachings, which are an exhortation to get and keep wisdom because of the blessings she bestows. In (2a), ver. 10 is an exhortation similar to that of ver. 1; ver. 11 gives a reason for it; ver. 12 gives the result of following the exhortation; ver. 13, a renewal of the exhortation; ver. 14, 15, admonition to avoid the ways of evil men; ver. 16, 17, two related reasons for this admonition; ver. 19, 18 (see note above), description of the ways of the wicked and of the righteous. In (2b), ver. 20, 21 are an admonition to heed the words of the

## CHAPTER IV.

1 HEAR, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

1 HEAR, my sons, the instruction of a father, And attend to know understanding:

2 For I give you good doctrine; Forsake ye not my law.

3 For I was a son unto my father, Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

4 And he taught me, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words; Keep my commandments, and live:

5 Get wisdom, get understanding; Forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth:

6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee; Love her, and she shall keep thee.

7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom:

Yea, with all thou hast gotten get understanding.

8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: She shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

9 She shall give to thine head a chaplet of grace: A crown of beauty shall she deliver to thee.

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; And the years of thy life shall be many.

11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in paths of uprightness.

12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened;

And if thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: Keep her; for she is thy life.

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, And walk not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it; Turn from it, and pass on.

writer; ver. 22, 23, their observance in soul and conduct will bring long life; ver. 24-27, warning against any deviation from the right path.

1. The verse is similar to 1: 8. **To know**, *i. e.*, so as to become acquainted with. **2. Law**, render, *teaching*, and see note on 1: 8. **3.** This verse is to be regarded as what is called a circumstantial clause, really subordinate to the following verse which introduces the principal thought, so that it should be rendered, ver. 3: *For, when I was a son, etc.*; ver. 4: *Then he taught me, etc.* **Only beloved**, render, *an only child*. **In the sight of** probably means *under the protection of*. This would mean then not that he was necessarily an only child, but that he was in effect such, being the (youngest) one under the special care of his mother. **5.** Omit it of R. V., as in A. R. V. **B** shows how to carry out the advice of **a**. **6.** 8: 17 is similar. **7.** Render: *The beginning of wisdom (is) get wisdom; and at the cost of (or, in return for) all thy possessions get understanding*. **A** means that the beginning of wisdom is to realize its importance and worth and to strive after it. **B** adds to this that it should be obtained at the cost of everything else. The rendering of **a** is more natural from the Hebrew than that of R. V. Some have thought that ver. 7 interrupts the connection and should therefore be omitted,

with G. It is not unnatural, however, that after the earnest exhortations to get wisdom, the question should be asked how to get it, to which ver. 7 is designed to be the answer. Ver. 7 thus connects itself quite closely with ver. 5, but it is not unusual that it should not follow immediately. **9. Chaplet of grace**. See note on the same phrase on 1: 9.

**10.** See note on 3: 2. **11.** Render: *I teach thee . . . I lead thee*, etc. There is nothing to indicate that there is a reference to some past teaching; the natural reference is to the present teaching which he is now giving. The verse thus, without *for*, really assigns a reason for ver. 10, as ver. 2 does for ver. 1. **Way of wisdom**. This might mean *way to wisdom*, as in Job 28: 23, but more probably means the way which belongs to wisdom and comes from her, as in the similar expression in 3: 17. **12.** This is closely connected with ver. 10. For the phraseology in **a**, see Job 18: 7, and for the thought, see also Ps. 18: 36. **13. Let her not go**. The result of the opposite is seen in Ezek. 18: 26. **For she is thy life** means she preserves life, she gives length of days. (See ver. 10.) **14a** forbids entering into the way of evil men, **b**, continuing to advance in it if one has been enticed therein. **15. Pass not by it** means pass not along upon it.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief;

And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness  
And drink the wine of violence.

18 But the path of the righteous is as the shining light,

That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness:  
They know not at what they stumble.

20 My son, attend to my words;

Incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes;  
Keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they are life unto those that find them,  
And health to all their flesh.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence;  
For out of it are the issues of life.

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth,  
And perverse lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on,  
And let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

**16.** For gives a reason for the preceding admonitions to avoid the way of the wicked, which reason is to be found in the character of the wicked. For at the beginning of ver. 17 does not give a reason for ver. 16 but is rather to be regarded as co-ordinate with for in ver. 16, giving another reason for the preceding admonitions. The two reasons are closely connected, however. Absence of food tends to sleeplessness, abundance of food to sleep, so that sleep and food are associated in the two verses. **19.** Stumble, better, will stumble. **18.** This verse is somewhat similar to Judg. 5:31. The shining light, better, with A. R. V., the dawning light, or even better, the light of dawn. **B.** Render: Which continually becomes brighter until full day. "Full day" is literally the established (part) of the day, נֶכְחֹן הַיּוֹם, *nekhôn hâyôm*. This has been understood by most commentators to be a description of noonday, so called because the sun then seems to stand still in the heavens, or because the tongue of the balance then stands upright. But both of these explanations are unnatural. It is better to regard it as a description of the morning when light is fully established, when the day has fully dawned, for the following reasons: (1) It is favored by the parallelism, a refers naturally to the dawn. (2) A noun meaning midday is in common use, which would naturally have been used to express that idea. (3) The literal rendering of the expression favors this view. The meaning established naturally suggests the full establishment of light, which is in the morning, not at noon. The idea of standing still is only inferred, it is not expressed. The path of the righteous, then, is to be regarded as compared to the dawn, in which the light becomes continually stronger until the day is fully established.

It would naturally refer to a cloudless dawn, such as was common during the dry season. What is the point of comparison here with light and darkness respectively? It would naturally be of the same kind in both. One would perhaps be inclined to think of them as having reference to moral character. But there is really nothing here to indicate that meaning; all the evidence would point to the comparison as having reference to the result of moral character, viz, good and evil fortune respectively. This is indicated by the reference to stumbling in ver. 19; it is darkness that causes stumbling, *i. e.*, misfortune. It is also indicated by the general fact that in Proverbs generally, and in this part as well as the others, the prosperity of the righteous and adversity of the wicked are often dwelt upon. In particular this is the thought with which a paragraph is apt to close, as in 2:21, 22.

**22.** The thought is similar to that of ver. 10 and 13; see also note on 3:2. **Health**, better, healing. **23. Heart** is here used for the inner part of man in general; render, soul. **With all diligence.** This is not the rendering properly of MT., but is obtained by a slight change, reading בְּכָל, *b'khôl*, for מִכָּל, *mikkôl*, giving what is apparently the text of G. and S., although their translations may be only free renderings of MT. There seems to be no need of a change of text; render: more than all things to be guarded. **Issues of life.** Perhaps there is no better rendering. The meaning of b seems to be, for from it life in its various manifestations goes forth. The life of man, physical and spiritual, is controlled by his soul; the internal governs the external. This is not, perhaps, a common thought in Proverbs, but other explanations give a forced meaning to some of the words. **25.** This verse

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

26 Make level the path of thy feet.

And let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: Remove thy foot from evil.

## CHAPTER V.

1 MY son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:

2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.

3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:

4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

6 Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.

1 MY son, attend unto my wisdom:

Incline thine ear to my understanding.

2 That thou mayest preserve discretion,

And that thy lips may keep knowledge.

3 For the lips of a strange woman drop honey,

And her mouth is smoother than oil:

4 But her latter end is bitter as wormwood,

Sharp as a two-edged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death;

Her steps take hold on Sheol:

6 So that she findeth not the level path of life:

Her ways are unstable and she knoweth it not.

is similar in thought to 17:24. The verse inculcates singleness of purpose in following the right way. **26. Make level.** Render, *Look upon, i. e.*, consider carefully. It is an exhortation to careful attention to the way in order that it may not be lost. For the rendering see note on 5:6. **Established** means fixed, firm, not varying. The parallelism is really synonymous. Careful attention means careful following of the path. The thought of the verse is similar to that of ver. 25. **27.** The path of wisdom is a straight, level way.

**Chap. 5.** The general thought of the chapter: Warning against the temptations of adulteresses, and exhortation to lawful love. Analysis: (1) Ver. 1, 2, exhortation to attend to wisdom; (2) ver. 3-6, the reason, statement of the end of adulteresses; (3) ver. 7-14, exhortation to avoid them entirely; (4) ver. 15-19, exhortation instead to the enjoyment of lawful wedded love; (5) ver. 20-23, general conclusion, punishment is sure to overtake the evil-doer. Connection of thought. The thought of (1) and (2) is sufficiently indicated by the analysis and the notes. In (3) ver. 7, 8 are a general admonition to avoid adulteresses entirely; ver. 9-11 describe the results of intercourse with them, chiefly loss of property; ver. 12-14 give the final expression of regret. On (4) see the notes. In (5) ver. 20 is a summing up of the thought of ver. 15-19; ver. 21-23 give a reason for this exhortation: ver. 21, Jehovah sees all a man's acts; ver. 22, 23, as a result of this knowledge follows the certainty that punishment will come upon sin. This is not limited to adultery, but is generalized. It is the connection with ver. 21 that indicates that the punishment of ver. 22, 23 comes from Jehovah.

3. **Strange woman**, see note on 2:16.

4. Render with R. V., **But her latter end**

is, not *But in the end she is* (A. R. V.). The verse refers not chiefly to her own fate, but rather to that which she is really preparing for others, for those whom she entices. **Wormwood** is the direct antithesis of **honey** in ver. 3; **sharp**, in contrast with **smooth** of ver. 3. **6.** Render: *So that she does not look upon the path of life; her paths waver (and) she does not know it.* It is probable that **b** is to be regarded as the protasis and **a** as the apodosis, so that the meaning will be brought out more clearly in English by transposing the clauses, as follows: *Her paths waver (and) she does not know it, so that she does not look upon the path of life.* "She does not know it" is subordinate, so that the prominent thought is that her paths waver; the result of this is that she does not look upon the path of life. The verse is thus largely a negative statement of that which is expressed positively in ver. 5; there it is stated that her feet go down to death, here that she does not look upon the path of life. "Path of life" is to be understood in the usual meaning, a path that leads to continued physical life, the opposite of premature death. There is no reason for giving any other meaning than this usual one to "life" here. The rendering above given differs from the usual one in the meaning assigned to the verb in **a**. The verb is **פָּלַס**, *pālas*, in the Hebrew. This is variously translated, but is usually supposed to have the fundamental meaning, *make level*. That meaning, however, is not particularly appropriate here and in most of the passages; in one or two it is decidedly inappropriate. It is noticeable that no good reason exists for giving this fundamental meaning to the Hebrew root. It seems better, therefore, to identify the root with the Assyrian root *pālisu*, which is precisely the same verb in form, and means to *look upon, see*. The meaning thus afforded is more appropriate than the one usu-

7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.

8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:

9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:

10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger;

11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,

12 And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;

13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

14 I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

7 Now therefore, *my* sons, hearken unto me, And depart not from the words of my mouth.

8 Remove thy way far from her, And come not nigh the door of her house:

9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, And thy years unto the cruel:

10 Lest strangers be filled with thy strength; And thy labours be in the house of an alien;

11 And thou mourn at thy latter end, When thy flesh and thy body are consumed,

12 And say, How have I hated instruction, And my heart despised reproof;

13 Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

14 I was well nigh in all evil In the midst of the congregation and assembly.

ally given. It is certainly better in this passage. It is specially appropriate in 4:26, where it is used in connection with the preceding verse which speaks entirely of seeing, and in 5:21b, where it is directly suggested by the parallelism, and it is not inappropriate in Isa. 26:7. In Ps. 78:50 probably it should be given the meaning which the common Hebrew word for *see*, רָאָה, *rā'ā*, sometimes has, viz. *prepare, provide*. The meaning *look upon* may also easily be given to the word in Ps. 58:2, instead of the denominative meaning usually assigned. These are all the passages in which the word occurs.<sup>1</sup>

7. This verse introduces what is to be regarded as a new paragraph, although closely connected with the preceding, so that **Now, therefore** introduces an express conclusion from the preceding verses. **Sons**, probably an allusion to 4:1. **8.** The verse means in general: do not associate with her. **B** is similar to Job 31:9. **9. Thine honor** is usually understood to be the manly vigor of youth wasted in lust, a possible meaning of the phrase, and **thy years** are supposed to mean the years lost by an early death, probably inflicted by the injured husband. But in opposition to this understanding of the verse is the fact that the following verse, 10, plainly speaks of the loss of property, and there is no allusion in the remainder of the paragraph, through ver. 14, to loss of life. There would be an obvious inconsistency in speaking of death first as the punishment, and afterward of the loss of property. In the connection, therefore, it is better, with Fr., to understand "years" in ver. 9 as used by metonymy for the fruit of the years, *wealth*. "Honor" in ver. 9, הֹדָה, *hōdh*, has usually the meaning, *splendor, majesty*. This would easily pass over into the meaning of *property*. Ver. 9 and 10 would then both refer to the loss of property; they are not tautological, however, for they express the same general idea in

different phraseology, which is often the case.

**The cruel** is often thought to refer specifically to the husband. More probably, however, it should be given a general application, as referring to any of those into whose power such courses would lead the one to whom advice is given, including the husband. **10. Strangers—alien.** Various specific meanings have been given to these words. It is doubtful if we are to seek for a specific meaning; it is probable that the meaning is rather general, those strangers to you, in whom you have no interest, probably intended to be in implied contrast with one's own relatives, to whom his property would naturally go. The important point is, you lose your property; some may go to the husband as gifts (see 6:35), while some may be squandered on the woman and those associated with her. **Strength, render, wealth. Thy labors, i. e.,** the result of the labors. **11. Latter end,** probably not specifically the end of life, as sometimes, but at the conclusion of the experience, *finally*. **B** is sometimes supposed to refer to the physical results of a dissolute life. But this is not the usual point of view of Proverbs, in which emphasis is laid rather upon the more striking effects, such as loss of property, as the more obvious results of sin. Others think that it is to be taken as a figurative account of the loss of property, as in Micah 3:2f. It seems rather more natural, because giving a good meaning without figurative use of the language, to regard it as describing physical condition, but not directly as the result of a dissolute life, rather as the result of the poverty and anxiety which come from the loss of property already described. **14. In all evil.** This means not moral evil, but *in all calamity, i. e.,* in the greatest calamity. The calamity referred to must be death, and this is not death at the hands of the husband, but as a punishment for adultery, inflicted in the presence of the con-

<sup>1</sup> Haupt, (in "Sacred Books of the Old Testament," Proverbs, p. 39), suggests the same meaning for רָאָה, *pādh*, in a part of its occurrences. That work appeared, however, after the manuscript of this commentary was prepared.



15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.

18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.

22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern,

And running waters out of thine own well.

16 Should thy springs be dispersed abroad, And rivers of water in the streets?

17 Let them be for thyself alone, And not for strangers with thee.

18 Let thy fountain be blessed; And rejoice in the wife of thy youth.

19 As a loving hind and a pleasant doe, Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; And be thou ravished always with her love.

20 For why shouldst thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, And embrace the bosom of a stranger?

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord,

And he maketh level all his paths.

22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked, And he shall be holden with the cords of his sin.

23 He shall die for lack of instruction; And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

gregation, as **b** shows. This was the legal punishment of adultery. (See Lev. 20 : 10 ; Deut. 22 : 22-27.) This statement probably does not mean that he was tried and acquitted, or succeeded in escaping punishment. It is difficult to see how he could have been acquitted if brought to trial, but rather that he only barely escaped being prosecuted. He had suffered about everything else, in the way of loss of property, and might reasonably have expected the punishment of death as well. The force of **Lest**, in ver. 10, ends here.

15. Ver. 15-19 (it should be 18) are regarded by König (*Stilistik*, p. 109), as an allegory, probably correctly. The basis of the allegory is the comparison of sexual enjoyment to the drinking of water, the point of comparison probably being the satisfaction of the natural desires of man. Ver. 15 would then mean, satisfy your sexual desires in connection with your own wife. 16. In this verse it is thought by many that the representation of ver. 15 is reversed, so that **springs** and **streams** refer to the man. This would be very unnatural. The meaning should be in general harmony with the preceding and following. Others think that the words refer to the man's wife, involving the implied thought that if the husband break the marriage vow the wife may naturally be expected to do the same. This is better, but such an implied thought is not altogether natural. It seems best, therefore, to take "thy springs" and "streams" not in the sense of *those which thou ownest*, *i. e.*, a wife, but *those which thou enjoyest*, in this verse used of a harlot, and in ver. 17 of the wife. This seems to involve the least difficulty. The meaning of ver. 16 then is, let not the water which thou drinkest be from sources common to all, but (ver. 17) from that which is only for thyself. 17. This statement is in the form

of an answer to ver. 16, although the answer to that verse is supposed to be really obvious. 18. **Blessed** is by many referred exclusively to that which in the Old Testament is so often spoken of as the blessing of wedded life, viz, children. No such specific reference, however, seems demanded by the context, so that it is better to regard it as general, including that idea, blessed in general through God's sanction of legitimate enjoyment. **B** is also to be taken in the same general meaning. 19. **Doe**, render, *gazelle*, which is more probably correct. In ver. 15-19 the wife, in contrast with the harlot, is spoken of as a legitimate, as contrasted with an illegitimate means of gratifying sexual desire. This does not mean, of course, that the author considered the marriage relation as consisting only of this side, but this was the side which had force for his argument. The Apostle Paul uses a similar thought in a similar way in 1 Cor. 7 : 9.

20. **Why**. The Hebrew word, לָמָּה, *lammā*, shows that the meaning here is purpose, not cause. The thought is not *for what cause*, but *for what purpose, with what intention*. **Strange woman . . . stranger**. See note on 2 : 16. 21. Similar to 15 : 3. **Maketh level**. Render, *looks upon*, and see note on ver. 6. 23. **He shall go astray**. It is probably better to render, *he shall reel*, the word that is used of a drunken man, *i. e.*, he shall stagger and fall.

6 : 1-19. The general thought of the section : Warnings against various common faults. These warnings are (1) ver. 1-5, against suretyship; (2) ver. 6-11, against laziness; (3) ver. 12-15, against general worthlessness; (4) ver. 16-19, against seven specific sins. For further statements concerning the connection of thought see the notes.

## CHAPTER VI.

1 MY son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, 8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

1 MY son, if thou art become surety for thy neighbour,

If thou hast stricken thy hands for a stranger,

2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, Seeing thou art come into the hand of thy neighbour;

Go, humble thyself, and importune thy neighbour.

4 Give not sleep to thine eyes,

Nor slumber to thine eyelids.

5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter,

And as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard;

Consider her ways, and be wise:

7 Which having no chief,

Overseer, or ruler,

8 Provideth her meat in the summer,

And gathereth her food in the harvest.

9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?

When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,

A little folding of the hands to sleep:

11 So shall thy poverty come as a robber,

And thy want as an armed man.

1-5. The specific references to the matter of suretyship concerning property are all in Proverbs. The fact that there is no mention of it in the law would indicate that the practice was not a very common one. The references in Proverbs, aside from the present passage, ver. 1-5, are 11: 15; 17: 18; 20: 16; 22: 26 f; 27: 13. There are references to suretyship in Ecclesiasticus. The Hebrew phrase used in ver. 1,  $\text{לְרֵעִי}$ , 'ārābh le, never elsewhere means to become surety for one. Hence it is better to render *with* in both clauses of ver. 1, instead of *for*. Then *neighbor* and *stranger* both refer to the creditor, not the debtor. For "stranger" render *another*. 2 is sometimes regarded as part of the protasis, sometimes as the beginning of the apodosis. In the former case the thought of this passage is not the condemnation of all suretyship, but only of that which is ensnaring; in the latter case all is condemned, no exception being made. What is the thought of the other passages in Proverbs? 20: 16 and 27: 13 are not explicit (see notes there), but the other passages, naturally interpreted, condemn all suretyship, as might be expected in the intense form of expression of Proverbs. Hence it is better to regard the thought here as the same, and ver. 2 as the beginning of the apodosis. This is also more probable from the Hebrew phraseology. *Neighbor* in ver. 3 should naturally have the same application as in ver. 1, *i. e.*, to the creditor. In ver. 1 it is stated that the man addressed is to seek deliverance from the power of the creditor, which must be by a release from his obligation. This, however, would naturally be *before* the

time of payment, not *after*, as is commonly assumed. Hence ver. 4 inculcates diligence; attend to the matter before the time of payment, after which time no mercy is to be expected. A release from the obligation might not unnaturally be obtained in some manner *before* the time of payment, it could hardly be expected later. The interests of the one for whom one became surety are not considered here, it is the way of escaping from the danger. The various other views of the passage which have been held need not be considered in detail. Perhaps the most common interpretation is that which understands the "neighbor" of ver. 3 to be the debtor for whom one has become surety. Then ver. 3-5 are understood to mean, go to the debtor and urge him to pay, so that you need not be held for the debt. That is the kind of advice that would be so obvious that it would seem unnecessary to give it, and the action proposed would be in most cases ineffectual, so that the statement of 3, *deliver thyself*, would hardly seem to be warranted. 3b is a parenthetical clause explaining "deliver thyself" of a. 3c, the rendering of R. V. is probably correct, although not certainly so. This means: comply with any conditions demanded, however humiliating, that ensure your release.

6. *Ant*,  $\text{אַנְט}$ , *n'mālā*, only used here and in 30: 25. *Be wise*, better, *become wise*. 8. *Meat*. Render, *food*, with A. R. V. 9. The thought of 20: 13a is similar to that of ver. 9-11. 10. Identical with 24: 33. This verse is the answer to ver. 9 put into the mouth of the sluggard. 11. Nearly identical with 24: 34.

12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.

13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers;

14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.

15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

16 These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

12 A worthless person, a man of iniquity;

He walketh with a froward mouth;

13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet,

He maketh signs with his fingers;

14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth evil continually;

He soweth discord.

15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly;

On a sudden shall he be broken, and that without remedy.

16 There be six things which the Lord hateth;

Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him:

17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,

And hands that shed innocent blood;

18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,

Feet that be swift in running to mischief;

19 A false witness that uttereth lies,

And he that soweth discord among brethren.

This is the response of the writer to ver. 10. The thought naturally suggested by the comparisons in ver. 11 is not *swiftness*, but *irresistibility*.

**12a.** Render: *A man of worthlessness is a man of trouble*, or more freely, *A worthless man is a man to whom trouble comes*. The Hebrew word here rendered *trouble*, R. V., **iniquity**, יָשׁוּעַ, 'āwēn, is a word which several times in Proverbs means *wickedness, iniquity*, but in at least two passages, 22 : 8 and 12 : 21, has the meaning *trouble, calamity*, which is quite common elsewhere, and, in fact, is probably the original meaning of the word. The latter rendering is to be preferred here. It is necessary, in order to avoid the tautology and the difficulty of construction which seem to be inevitable on any other view. It is also favored by the connection of thought, especially by ver. 15, which thus becomes an expansion of the thought here. The thought is similar to that of 22 : 8. "Man of trouble," יָשׁוּעַ שׁוֹנֵן, 'ish 'āwēn, is a phrase precisely similar to *man of death*, מֵוֹת שׁוֹנֵן, 'ish māwēth, rendered *worthy of death* in 1 Kings 2 : 26. In **12b** render as in A. R. V., but omit **he**; **b** is a clause parallel in construction to ver. 13. Ver. 12b, 13, and 14 are explanations and expansions of the phrase *A worthless man* of ver. 12a. **13. Speaketh**, render, *shuffles*. The specific signification of the various acts of this verse is not indicated, in general it is evident that they are a part of underhanded, stealthy activity. **14b** is similar to 3 : 29a. **14c.** For similar disapproval of contentment, see especially ver. 19b; 3 : 30; 15 : 1b; 16 : 28; 17 : 14, 19a; 20 : 3b; and for the contrasted idea, Ps. 34 : 14. **15.** The form of statement is entirely general, and would therefore cover both direct visitation from the hand of God, and disaster which comes through the agency of man. The thing asserted is the certainty of the coming of disaster, in some way or

other. Omit **and that**. **Without remedy** distinctly marks this punishment as different from some punishments which are merely temporary.

**16-19.** The connection of these verses with the preceding is furnished by ver. 19b, which refers to ver. 14c. **16. Six . . . yea, seven.** This is an emphatic way of saying seven; phraseology similar to this is quite common in the Old Testament. The only other cases of a similar use of numbers in Proverbs are in 30 : 18, 21, 29, and also in 30 : 15 according to the common view, but see note there. There is no special significance in the use of a particular number, for several different numbers are used. **17.** Somewhat similar collections of particulars are found in Ps. 5 : 6; 31 : 18. **Haughty eyes**, similar to 30 : 13; Ps. 18 : 27; 131 : 1; Isa. 2 : 11. **A lying tongue.** See 12 : 19b, 22a; 17 : 7b. **That shed innocent blood.** See 1 : 11 f, 16. **18b** is similar to 1 : 16a. **19b.** See note on ver. 14c.

**6 : 20 to 7 : 27.** The general thought of the section: Warning against adulteresses because they lead to destruction. Analysis: (1) 6 : 20-35, general warning against adulteresses because of the consequences which are sure to follow adultery; (2) 7 : 1-27, continuation of the warnings, especially in the form of a description of the way in which such temptation really comes. Connection of thought. In (1) 6 : 20-23 give an admonition to heed carefully the teaching of parents; ver. 24, these teachings preserve one from danger from adulteresses; ver. 25, admonition to avoid adulteresses; ver. 26-35, the inevitable consequences of intercourse with an adulteress, loss of property, danger to life, wounds, and dishonor. In (2) 7 : 1-4 give an admonition similar to that of 6 : 20-23 to heed carefully the teachings of the writer (the writer here corresponding to the parents in 6 : 20-23); ver. 5, very similar to 6 : 24, these teachings preserve

20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

23 For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.

27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

28 Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?

29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.

30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;

20 My son, keep the commandment of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, Tie them about thy neck.

22 When thou walkest, it shall lead thee; When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee; And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light;

And reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

24 To keep thee from the evil woman,

From the flattery of the stranger's tongue.

25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart;

Neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

26 For on account of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread:

And the adulteress hunteth for the precious life.

27 Can a man take fire in his bosom,

And his clothes not be burned?

28 Or can one walk upon hot coals,

And his feet not be scorched?

29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife;

Whosoever toucheth her shall not be unpunished.

30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal

To satisfy his soul when he is hungry:

one from danger from adulteresses; ver. 6-20, a description of a typical case of the temptation of an inexperienced youth by an adulteress; ver. 21-23, his yielding and the inevitable result, death; ver. 24-27, general conclusion, renewed admonition to avoid the adulteress, because her ways lead to death.

20. Almost identical with 1 : 8. **Law**, render, *teaching*, and see note on 1 : 8. 21. See note on 3 : 3. **A. Continually**, expresses the result of the binding, meaning, so as to be permanent. 22. In ver. 21 a plural pronoun was used, referring to the nouns of ver. 20 thought of individually as two; the singular pronoun in ver. 22 refers to the thought of the same nouns, but is a construction according to sense, the two nouns are thought of as practically one. **B** is somewhat similar to 3 : 24. 23. **For**, assigns the reason why the teaching is able to do that which is stated in ver. 22. **For the commandment . . . and the law**, render, *For a commandment . . . and teaching*, and see note on 1 : 8. There is no doubt here an allusion to the use of the same words in ver. 20, but since the words have no article in the Hebrew it seems best to regard them as being a generalization of ver. 20, the teaching of thy parents and any similar teaching. **Lamp**, see Ps. 119 : 105. **The way of life**, see 2 : 19; 3 : 2, 16; 5 : 6. 24. For this verse see 2 : 16, which is very similar. **To keep thee**. The meaning would probably be better expressed by rendering, *keeping thee*. **Stranger's**. See note on 2 : 16. 25a. See similar language in Exod. 20 : 17; Ps. 45 : 11; Matt. 5 : 28. **In thy heart**, means simply *within thee*. **Take thee**. A similar phrase is found in Eccl. 7 : 26. 26. The form of expres-

sion of **a** seems elliptical and awkward. Many different views of its meaning have been held, and several changes of text have been suggested. A reading may be suggested, involving only a slight change of one letter in the consonantal text, **כִּי בְּעֵר אֵשׁ הַזֹּנָה**, *ki bh'ar'esh haz-zonā*, for **כִּי בְּעֵר אִשָּׁה זֹנָה**, *ki bh'adh 'ishshā zōnā*, which then would be rendered, *For the fire of a harlot consumes even unto a piece of bread.*<sup>1</sup> This removes the elliptical and awkward nature of the expression, and provides a natural meaning as well as phraseology. It is favored by the fact that the use of the same figure, "fire," in connection with harlots is continued in ver. 27, 28. The meaning would thus be, the destructiveness of the harlot, indicated by fire, continues to operate until the man affected is reduced to a morsel of bread. The parallelism then is synonymous, **a**, indicating the destitution caused by the destructive activity of a harlot, and **b**, the danger to life by reason of an adulteress, presented by a different figure. For the parallelism, see further note on 2 : 16. 27. **Bosom**, better, *lap*. 29. A statement in positive form, applying the thought of the questions of ver. 27, 28. **Shall not be unpunished**. The statement is general in form, including both human and divine punishment. There is no reason for restricting it, as many do, to human punishment. It is a positive statement as to the fact of punishment, not as to the precise method. 30-32. The difficulty here is chiefly concerning the meaning of ver. 30 and its connection with what follows. Many different opinions have been held. Without recounting these, the following is indicated as the meaning and connection of thought which is most natural,

<sup>1</sup> See "American Journal of Semitic Languages," Vol. XIX., p. 53.

31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold ; he shall give all the substance of his house.

32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding : he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

33 A wound and dishonour shall he get ; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

34 For jealousy is the rage of a man : therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

35 He will not regard any ransom ; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold ; He shall give all the substance of his house.

32 He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of understanding ;

He doeth it that would destroy his own soul.

33 Wounds and dishonour shall he get ;

And his reproach shall not be wiped away.

34 For jealousy is the rage of a man ;

And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

35 He will not regard any ransom ;

Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

because not giving to any portion a forced interpretation. Ver. 30 is to be regarded as a declarative, not an interrogative, statement. Ver. 31 is to be rendered, *But one found must restore seven-fold ; he must give all the substance of his house.* Ver. 30 and 31 speak of two different cases. The great objection to regarding them as referring to the same case is that in the very nature of things one who is stealing to satisfy his hunger would be utterly unable to restore seven-fold. Ver. 30 describes a man who steals and eats at once. Ver. 31 gives the case of the man who is not prompted by hunger, but who steals and keeps, and is **found**, *i. e.*, is caught with the plunder in his possession. Ver. 30 and 31 are in contrast, but the phraseology is Orientaly intense, it is the idiom of exaggerated contrast, where the relatively unimportant is absolutely denied, as in 8 : 10 and elsewhere. The meaning is that comparatively men do not despise the one who steals from hunger, that is, he is not despised and treated with the severity with which men treat the man who is caught with plunder for which he has no such excuse. This meaning is indicated by the fact that an absolute justification of a thief who steals from hunger would be contrary to sound morality, and there is no reason for attributing the thought to the writer here, when this other meaning suits the language used equally well. These two verses, while giving a good meaning in themselves, are really intended to lead up to ver. 32. The relation of thought is not expressed, it is, however, clearly implied. The adulterer is compared to the second case ; his is not a case for which one can find any real excuse which mitigates the offense. But ver. 32b-35 would indicate that there is an additional thought, that the comparison is not simply with the second case rather than the first, but the consequences which follow show it to be even worse than the second case. The results of stealing mentioned are summed up in loss of property ; the results of adultery include more than that. Men do despise him and treat him with such severity that his case is even worse than that of the thief who has no excuse. **31. Sevenfold.** This is not strictly according

to the law, which prescribes twofold, Exod. 22 : 4, or four or fivefold, Exod. 22 : 1. These different regulations suggest, however, that the procedure was not absolutely uniform. Probably the statement here has in mind a private settlement, at which prevailing custom would govern. This statement is strengthened in **b. 32b** may be rendered more literally, *He destroys himself who does it.* This statement is amplified in the following verses, showing how this takes place. The appeal is here, as often in Proverbs, to the practical motive of an enlightened self-interest. The rendering, *He destroys himself*, makes the thought general, not an exclusive reference to death, as the following verses show. It means he destroys his own best interests in general. **33.** The fact that in the preceding verse it is adultery distinctively which is spoken of, and the fact that in the two following verses it is the injured husband who is in mind make it probable that he is thought of chiefly here, particularly in the use of the word **wounds**. In the law the punishment of adultery was death for both parties (Deut. 22 : 22-24 ; Lev. 20 : 10 ; see Ezek. 23 : 45-47). As death is not mentioned here it is probable that the reference is not to judicial punishment, but to that inflicted by the husband in private vengeance. The punishment of the woman is not mentioned, probably both because it is not judicial punishment that is in mind, and also because, as in other similar cases, the thought of the author is not concerned with the consequences to the woman, but to the man, as he is giving advice to men. **Reproach**, better, *ignominy*. **34. Day of vengeance.** This might be either legal or private. But the fact that the injured husband is referred to, and also that there are no references to strictly legal punishments, would indicate that the reference is to the private vengeance. **35. Ransom** is general, anything given in place of punishment. **Gifts** is more specific, being used simply of money. It often means *bribes*, which is not the thought here, although similar to that. Here, as indicated already, the reference is to a private settlement by acceptance of money, instead of the infliction of punishment.

## CHAPTER VII.

1 MY son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.  
 2 Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.  
 3 Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.  
 4 Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:  
 5 That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.  
 6 For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,  
 7 And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,  
 8 Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,  
 9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:  
 10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot, and subtle of heart.  
 11 (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:  
 12 Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

**Chap. 7.** 1 is similar to 3 : 1 and several other passages. 2. **Law**, render *teaching*, and see note on 1 : 8. **The apple of thine eye**, better, *the pupil of thine eye*. This is mentioned here as a type of the most precious things, as also in Deut. 32 : 10; Ps. 17 : 8. 3. **Fingers**. The reference here is not to phylacteries, which were a later custom, but probably to seal rings; there is perhaps an allusion to such passages as Exod. 13 : 16; Deut. 6 : 8; 11 : 18. **The table of thine heart**. (See note on 3 : 3.) **Heart**, render, *mind*. 5. Very similar to 2 : 16 and 6 : 24; see also 5 : 3. **That they may keep thee**. This is probably to be connected not simply with ver. 4, but with all the preceding verses of the chapter. **Strange woman . . . stranger**. (See note on 2 : 16.) 6. This verse introduces a long illustrative passage, describing by way of example such a case as frequently happens, which shows the danger mentioned in ver. 5. 8. The introduction of the pronouns here to which there is no immediate antecedent is somewhat uncommon, but not unprecedented. It gives no reason for changing the text, as the meaning is plain. The pronouns are probably to be regarded as referring back in thought to ver. 5, or rather to a woman in mind who is of the class there mentioned. Render, *Passing along the street near her corner, walking in the way to her house*. The R. V. implies that he was intentionally seeking her house. Nothing here indicates that, and ver. 10 distinctly implies the opposite. He was merely walking about and chanced to go near her house. She did the seeking. This is the thought indicated in the translation given. **Her corner**, the corner

1 MY son, keep my words,  
 And lay up my commandments with thee.  
 2 Keep my commandments and live;  
 And my law as the apple of thine eye.  
 3 Bind them upon thy fingers;  
 Write them upon the table of thine heart.  
 4 Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister;  
 And call understanding thy kinswoman:  
 5 That they may keep thee from the strange woman,  
 From the stranger which flattereth with her words.  
 6 For at the window of my house  
 I looked forth through my lattice;  
 7 And I beheld among the simple ones,  
 I discerned among the youths,  
 A young man void of understanding,  
 8 Passing through the street near her corner,  
 And he went the way to her house;  
 9 In the twilight, in the evening of the day,  
 In the blackness of night and the darkness.  
 10 And, behold, there met him a woman  
 With the attire of an harlot, and wily of heart.  
 11 She is clamorous and wilful;  
 Her feet abide not in her house:  
 12 Now she is in the streets, now in the broad places,  
 And lieth in wait at every corner.

near her house. 9. It seems plain that **a** refers to twilight, **b** to midnight. Some think that we have here a single case, protracted from twilight to about midnight. That seems quite unlikely, however, if we are to regard the meeting as accidental on the man's part, which is plainly implied elsewhere. It is better, therefore, to regard the statement as covering two classes of cases, in the early evening, and in the middle of the night. A single instance is described, to be sure, but as typical, and this statement comes in here to indicate that there is danger to be apprehended at any time of night. The meaning would be brought out by understanding *or before b*. 10. **Behold** introduces what follows as new and somewhat unusual, and implies that the appearance of the woman was unexpected by the man. **There met him**, render, *there comes to meet him*. **A woman**. Some think it necessary to add the article, *the woman, i. e.*, the one mentioned in ver. 8. Here, however, is simply a regular Hebrew idiom by which the article is occasionally omitted with a noun really definite when the intention is to emphasize character and not individuality. No doubt the reference is to the woman of ver. 8. But by the omission of the article the attention is called not so much to that fact as it is to her character, which appears here in the added statements of **b**, ver. 11, 12. 11. **Clamorous and wilful**, better, *boisterous and rebellious*, the latter word referring especially to her attitude toward her husband. Ver. 11, 12 are parenthetical, giving a description of the character and customary actions of this woman; ver. 13 resumes the narrative of ver. 10. 12. **Broad places**,

13 So she caught him, and kissed him, *and* with an impudent face said unto him,

14 *I have* peace offerings with me; **this day** have I paid my vows.

15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved *works*, with fine linen of Egypt.

17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

19 For the goodman *is* not at home, he is gone a long journey:

20 He hath taken a bag of money with him, *and* will come home at the day appointed.

21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

22 He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;

23 Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

24 Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

13 So she caught him, and kissed him, *And* with an impudent face she said unto him:

14 Sacrifices of peace offerings are with me; **This day** have I paid my vows.

15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee, Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

16 I have spread my couch with carpets of tapestry. With striped cloths of the yarn of Egypt.

17 I have perfumed my bed With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning;

Let us solace ourselves with loves.

19 For the goodman is not at home, He is gone a long journey:

20 He hath taken a bag of money with him; He will come home at the full moon.

21 With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield, With the flattering of her lips she forceth him away.

22 He goeth after her straightway, As an ox goeth to the slaughter, Or as fetters to the correction of the fool;

23 Till an arrow strike through his liver; As a bird hasteth to the snare, And knoweth not that it is for his life.

24 Now therefore, *my* sons, hearken unto me, And attend to the words of my mouth.

25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, Go not astray in her paths.

such as squares before the gates, where the people were accustomed to gather. **13. So she caught him**, better, *And she seized him*. The word *seized* as well as other statements indicates that the seeking was from her. **14a.** Render, *Sacrifices of peace offerings were due from me*. The peace offering was one of the common sacrifices, in which the sacrificial meal was the prominent part. These peace offerings, she now says, were prepared at the fulfillment of vows, and she invites the young man to assist in eating. This shows the union of religion and immorality, which was common in those days. See Hosea 4: 10 f; Ezek. 23: 39 f. It also shows that she was an Israelite, at least in customs. The regulations for a peace offering in connection with a vow are given in Lev. 7: 16-18. As the sacrifice must be at the temple in Jerusalem, it follows that the scene of this incident is in Jerusalem. **This day**. See the regulation in Lev. 7: 16. **Vows**, apparently more than one were paid at the same time. **15. Omit Diligently. Thee**. The statement that she was seeking this particular man is doubtless to be regarded as pretense; she was seeking some man to share the feast. **16. Carpets of tapestry**, render simply, *coverings*. **B** is manifestly intended to indicate that which is rare and costly. **17**. The three perfumes mentioned in **b** occur together also in Cant. 4: 14, the first two in Ps. 45: 8. The statements of ver. 16, 17, and 20 indicate the possession of wealth. **18b.** Render, *Let us enjoy ourselves with love*. **19. The goodman**. Some would change the text and read *my hus-*

*band* with G, וְשִׁי, 'ishi, for שֶׁשֶׁן, hā'ish. But this is unnecessary. It seems better to regard the expression as purposely slighting and contemptuous. **20. A bag of money**. *Purse* is better than "bag." This is mentioned as an indication of a prolonged absence, making it probable that he is to be regarded as a merchant, gone off for purposes of trade. **The full moon**, probably having reference to a feast, either Passover or Tabernacles, for which he was planning to return. **21. Flattering**, better, *enticing*. **22, 23**. It is generally agreed that there is some corruption of text in these verses, especially in ver. 22e, because they afford no good sense. The simplest of the many corrections offered that gives a suitable meaning is to transpose two words in ver. 22e, עֲבָרָה, 'ekhāg, and לֵב, 'wil, and to put ver. 23a at the end of ver. 23, the latter change being made because as it stands ver. 23a interrupts the thought and interferes with the parallelism. With these changes, ver. 22, 23 may be translated: *He goes after her suddenly, like an ox that goes to slaughter, or like a fool unto punishment by fetters, (ver. 23) Like the hastening of a bird to a snare; and he knows not that it is at the price of his life, until an arrow cleaves his liver. Fool* has the implied idea of *wicked*, as in the same word rendered *foolish* in Job 5: 3, לֵב, 'wil, and usually. The form in which disaster overtakes him is not stated, as it is in 5: 9-14, but it comes suddenly and unexpectedly. The result here is death. **25a.** Render, *Let not thy mind turn aside to her ways*. **Sons** in ver.

26 For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

27 Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

26 For she hath cast down many wounded: Yea, all her slain are a mighty host.

27 Her house is the way to Sheol, Going down to the chambers of death.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1 DOTH not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

2 She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors:

4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

5 O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

1 DOTH not wisdom cry,

And understanding put forth her voice?

2 In the top of high places by the way, Where the paths meet, she standeth;

3 Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,

At the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud:

4 Unto you, O men, I call;

And my voice is to the sons of men.

5 O ye simple, understand subtilty;

And, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

24 become singular in ver. 25, a process of individualizing common in Hebrew. **26b** may better be rendered, *And numerous are all her slain*. **26, 27** present the familiar thought in Proverbs of premature death as the punishment for sin, here, for this particular form of sin. **27a**. Render, *Her house is ways to sheol*. This is the literal rendering, and the meaning is, her house offers not one but many ways which lead to the same result. Sheol, as usual, is the place of the dead in general, the punishment consists in the going prematurely. The usual Old Testament meaning of chambers suggests that here in **b** they mean the innermost parts of the region controlled by death, *i. e.*, of sheol; see the same thought more forcibly expressed in 9:18. This would be a rhetorical strengthening of the idea. It does not imply that there could be a return to this life from any part of sheol, but it would say that even if there were, this part is the most inaccessible, from which a return is the least likely.

**8:1 to 9:18**. The general thought of the section: Personified wisdom and folly invite the simple-minded to follow their teachings and receive their gifts. Analysis: (1) Ver. 1-3, personified wisdom is introduced as crying out to men; (2) ver. 4-11, beginning of her message, exhortation to hear; (3) ver. 12-21, statement of the blessings she brings; (4) ver. 22-31, the prominent part of wisdom in the creation of the world; (5) ver. 32-36, general statement of the results of finding and missing wisdom; (6) 9:1-12, invitation to her feast; (7) ver. 13-18, personified folly also extends an invitation to her feast. Connection of thought: In (2) a general exhortation to hear (ver. 4, 5), is followed by a reason for it, which is a statement of the habitual characteristics of her teachings (ver. 6-9), and another reason, the general value of her instruction (ver. 10, 11). In (3), ver. 12-14 state various desirable qualities involved in the possession of wisdom; ver. 15, 16, the im-

portance of wisdom to rulers; ver. 17-21, wisdom brings wealth and also possessions better than wealth. In (4), ver. 22-26 express the thought that wisdom was the first created object; ver. 27-30a, the presence and activity of wisdom in the creation of the world; ver. 30b-31, the delight of wisdom in the wonders of creation. In (6), in 9:1, 2, wisdom prepares her feast; in ver. 3-6 she invites the simple to the feast; ver. 7-10 are a parenthesis, giving the reason why the invitation is limited to the simple, which is that a hardened sinner will not heed instruction, fear of Jehovah is the necessary starting-point; ver. 11, 12, the importance of heeding the invitation of wisdom, because of the results to one's own life. In (7), ver. 13-15 describe the preparations of folly; ver. 16, 17, her invitation; ver. 18, the results to her guests.

1. On this passage, see 1:20 f., which is very similar, and notes there. The question plainly implies the answer, *yes*. **2, 3**. It is probable that here, as in 1:20 f., we are to think not merely of one place as described, but of various places about the city where wisdom is described as going at the same general time. Ver. 2 designates places best suited for public audience in the streets of the city, while ver. 3 speaks of the square at the entrance of the city, the common meeting-place. **High places** in ver. 2 are shown by the added phrase **by the way** to be not simply *highways, streets*, but rather elevations by the side of the streets. These might be of various kinds in connection with the buildings or the walls, either natural or artificial. **Where the paths meet**, at the intersection of the streets. **She standeth**, render: *She has taken her stand*. **3**. Render: *Beside the gateways, at the portal of the city, at the entrance of the gates, she cries aloud*. These phrases are all descriptive of the same place, the square near the gates.

**5. Heart**, better, *mind*. It is exceptional that here fools are exhorted to receive wisdom; usually it is assumed that there is no hope of



6 Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips *shall be* right things.  
 7 For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.  
 8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; *there is* nothing froward or perverse in them.  
 9 They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.  
 10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.  
 11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.  
 12 I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.  
 13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.  
 14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.  
 15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.  
 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth.

6 Hear, for I will speak excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.  
 7 For my mouth shall utter truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.  
 8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; There is nothing crooked or perverse in them.  
 9 They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.  
 10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.  
 11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared unto her.  
 12 I wisdom have made subtilty my dwelling, and find out knowledge and discretion.  
 13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: Pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.  
 14 Counsel is mine, and sound knowledge: I am understanding; I have might.  
 15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.  
 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth.

this. The nature of the case and the parallelism both show that they are thought of here as not fully fixed in folly. 6-9. The usual translation makes ver. 6, 7a a statement concerning the nature of that which wisdom is about to speak on this occasion. But ver. 7b-9 plainly describe general characteristics of wisdom. It therefore seems better to regard ver. 6, 7a also as doing the same, the tenses being frequentatives. So render: *I speak . . . is right things . . . utters truth.* What is always true of her will of course be true of her on this occasion. Ver. 6-9 then give the reason for **hear** at the beginning of ver. 6. 8. **Are in righteousness** means are in accordance with justice, *i. e.*, are just. **Crooked or perverse** are used in an ethical sense, describing that which is a perversion of the right, a departure from it. (See 2 : 15.) 9. **Plain.** Some think that the meaning here is *true*, but it is more in accordance with the usual meaning of the word to regard it as *clear*. **B. Find,** better, *have attained.* **Right** must be used subjectively, they are recognized as right by those who have already attained knowledge. This teaches that those who are wise will recognize the truth of wisdom's words by the insight that is theirs. This makes the parallelism in ver. 9 not entirely exact, but sufficiently so; the thought of **a** is that they are easily understood, of **b** that they are recognized as true, by the wise men. 10, 11. See notes on 3 : 14, 15, where the thought and phraseology are similar, and see also 20 : 15. The parallelism and the general thought both show that in 10a we have the idiom of exaggerated contrast, it being a forcible way of expressing comparison. The meaning is: *Receive my instruction rather than silver*, but it is a more forcible expression. Ver. 11 is nearly identical

with 3 : 15; **b** should be rendered almost like 3 : 15b: *And all costly things are not equal in return for her.*

12a. Many think the language too violent, and seek to correct the text. But the language, although striking, is not unnatural. *Prudence*, A. R. V., is better than *subtilty*, R. V., better yet is *shrewdness*. The meaning is that shrewdness is the means of the practical expression of wisdom, as the body is the means of expression for the soul that inhabits it. **B, find out** means *come into possession of.* 13. Some think that this verse has been transferred from some other passage, or is a later addition, but without sufficient reason. It does, to be sure, somewhat interrupt the connection, but that is quite common in Proverbs. In itself it gives a good meaning. It assumes the close connection between wisdom and the fear of Jehovah, which has appeared in 1 : 29 and 2 : 5, and especially in 2 : 5-8 in connection with ver. 9-11. A familiar truth is stated in the first clause, and the statement there made concerning the fear of Jehovah wisdom then proceeds to assert of herself. The meaning of **evil** in the first clause is explained by the specifications following in the second clause, **pride, arrogance, etc.** 14. **I am understanding.** Understanding and wisdom are synonymous, to be sure, but in this personification of wisdom the synonymous qualities are spoken of in ver. 12 and 14 as belonging to wisdom. Hence it is better to render, as the Hebrew allows: *To me* (belong) *counsel and sound knowledge; to me* (belong) *understanding* (and) *might.* The statements in Isa. 11 : 2 are similar; while Job 12 : 13, 16 speaks in a similar way of God. 15. **Decree justice** means *decide justly.* On ver. 15-18 see Isa. 11 : 2. 16. **Judges,** מִשְׁפָּטִים, *shôphé'tim.* This

17 I love them that love me ; and those that seek me early shall find me.

18 Riches and honour are with me ; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold ; and my revenue than choice silver.

20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment :

21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance ; and I will fill their treasures.

22 The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth ; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth :

26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there : when he set a compass upon the face of the deep :

28 When he established the clouds above : when he strengthened the fountains of the deep :

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment : when he appointed the foundations of the earth :

30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him ; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him :

31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth ; and my delights were with the sons of men.

32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children : for blessed are they that keep my ways.

33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

17 I love them that love me ;

And those that seek me diligently shall find me.

18 Riches and honour are with me ;

Yea, durable riches and righteousness.

19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold ;

And my revenue than choice silver.

20 I walk in the way of righteousness,

In the midst of the paths of judgement :

21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance,

And that I may fill their treasures.

22 The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,

Before his works of old.

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, Or ever the earth was.

24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth ;

When there were no fountains abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains were settled,

Before the hills was I brought forth :

26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,

Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.

27 When he established the heavens, I was there :

When he set a circle upon the face of the deep :

28 When he made firm the skies above :

When the fountains of the deep became strong :

29 When he gave to the sea its bound,

That the waters should not transgress his commandment :

When he marked out the foundations of the earth :

30 Then I was by him, as a master workman :

And I was daily his delight.

Rejoicing always before him ;

31 Rejoicing in his habitable earth ;

And my delight was with the sons of men.

32 Now therefore, my sons, hearken unto me :

For blessed are they that keep my ways.

33 Hear instruction, and be wise,

And refuse it not.

means rulers, those who in a broad way administer justice, as in Amos 2 : 3 ; Micah 5 : 1 ; Ps. 2 : 10. This clause sums up the preceding, meaning, in short, all the rulers of the earth. It is to be noted that the opinion expressed of rulers in ver. 15, 16 is wholly favorable. **17b**, render: *And those that seek me find me*, a general truth, in harmony with **a**. **18a** is similar to 3 : 16b and 22 : 4. **Righteousness**. It is implied that this is accompanied by its natural result, viz, prosperity, as stated more fully in ver. 20, 21. For this idea see especially Ps. 24 : 5. **19**. Quite similar to 3 : 14, 15 and 8 : 11, although the thought here is slightly different. In those passages the comparison is with wisdom herself, here with what wisdom brings. **21. Inherit**, render, *possess*.

Some suppose that in ver. 22-31 there is the teaching that wisdom is actually a person. But this is highly improbable and unnecessary ; personification meets all the requirements of the description. The personification of wisdom here is similar to that found in all the rest of the chapter, in 9 : 1-12, and in 1 : 20-33. In this passage personified wisdom is described as the first created object, and as being present and assisting at the creation of the world, and also

as rejoicing in the creation. This teaches simply that the creation was an impressive display of Jehovah's wisdom, which is the same thought as in 3 : 19f. **22**. Render: *Jehovah formed me as the beginning of his way, the first of his works of old*. **Way** means *creative activity*. (See Job 26 : 14.) **23**. Render: *I was established in ancient time, in the beginning, at the first times of the earth*. Ver. 23-26 declare that wisdom is the first created object, created in times indefinitely remote. **25. Settled**, better, *sunk*. **26. Dust**, more literally, *clouds*. **27. Circle** refers to the horizon. **28. Skies**, literally, *clouds*. **B** refers probably to the fountains on the earth. **29**. See Job 38 : 8-11 ; Jer. 5 : 22 ; Ps. 104 : 9. **Marked out**, better, *laid*. **A** refers to the boundary between sea and land. **30, 31. Master workman**. This meaning is not certain here, but is probable. **His delight**, render: *Full of delight*. **Rejoicing** (twice) is not the literal meaning, it is too serious a word. *Making merry*, as the phrase is used in the Bible, is perhaps the best rendering ; the Hebrew word, רִנָּה, *sihēq*, is so translated in Jer. 15 : 17. The same verb is used in Prov. 10 : 23. It is a word expressing exuberant, light-hearted joy. The thought which many have

34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.  
 35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.  
 36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

34 Blessed is the man that heareth me.  
 Watching daily at my gates,  
 Waiting at the posts of my doors.  
 35 For whoso findeth me findeth life,  
 And shall obtain favour of the Lord.  
 36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul:  
 All they that hate me love death.

## CHAPTER IX.

1 WISDOM hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:  
 2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.  
 3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city.  
 4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,  
 5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.  
 6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.  
 7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.  
 8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.  
 9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

1 WISDOM hath builded her house,  
 She hath hewn out her seven pillars:  
 2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine;  
 She hath also furnished her table.  
 3 She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth Upon the highest places of the city,  
 4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither:  
 As for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him,  
 5 Come, eat ye of my bread,  
 And drink of the wine which I have mingled.  
 6 Leave off, ye simple ones, and live;  
 And walk in the way of understanding.  
 7 He that correcteth a scorner getteth to himself shame:  
 And he that reproveth a wicked man getteth himself a blot.  
 8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee:  
 Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee.  
 9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:  
 Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

found here, that creation was so *easy* for wisdom that it was like play, is quite foreign to the usual meaning of the word. **34.** In **b** and **c** the reference is to those waiting at the palace of a king or great man to see him, as in 14: 19. **35. Findeth life, and shall obtain favor.** Render: *Has found life, and has obtained favor.* The meaning is not so much that the possession of wisdom gives the assurance that one will obtain life and the favor of Jehovah, as it is that they are necessarily involved in the very possession of wisdom itself. The thought is substantially the same as that of the R. V., but stronger. **36a.** Render: *But he that misses me wrongs himself.* "Misses" is in contrast with "findeth" in ver. 35. This is the original meaning of the word, **חָטָא**, *hātā*, from which the much more common meaning to *sin* is derived. Here this meaning is indicated not only by the connection with ver. 35, but also by the meaning; one can hardly be said to sin against wisdom. The form of expression in the Hebrew would also be unusual if that were the meaning.

**Chap. 9. 1. Her seven pillars.** The pillars referred to were probably those used in supporting an upper gallery in a house around a central court. There is no reason to think that seven is used as having any sacred or mystical significance; it is more likely that it was simply a common number for such pillars. **2.**

Meat was a luxury, not a common article of diet with the masses of the people. It is thus emphasized as a prominent element in a feast. **Furnished**, better, *made ready*. **3.** This verse seems to present an inconsistency in the sending forth of the maidens, *i. e.*, servants with the invitation, and also in speaking of wisdom herself as crying. Inasmuch as what is said of wisdom is not that she goes forth, but only that she cries, it is probable, in harmony with the usual custom concerning feasts, that she is not to be thought of as going out herself, but the crying is through the agency of the maidens of **a**. **4. Void of understanding.** The Hebrew phrase, **בְּלִי-יָדָע**, *hāšār lēbh*, elsewhere has regularly an unfavorable meaning; here the parallelism and connection of thought show that it has not. **5. Bread**, better, *food*. **Mingled.** The mingling according to the common custom was with spices in preparation for drinking. **6.** This verse in its literal language shows plainly the meaning of the figurative language preceding, especially ver. 5. **Leave off.** The object naturally implied is simplicity. **7. Shame.** This is the common meaning of the word, but here the connection demands something more specific, so that the rendering of the A. R. V., *reviling*, is better. **Getteth himself a blot.** Render, *it is a blot to him*. **9.** The parallelism of **wise man** and **righteous man** it was very instructive, indicating that in the usage of

10 The fear of the Lord *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy *is* understanding.

11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

13 A foolish woman *is* clamorous; *she is* simple, and knoweth nothing.

14 For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city,

15 To call passengers who go right on their ways:

16 Whoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

17 Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

18 But he knoweth not that the dead *are* there; and that her guests *are* in the depths of hell.

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:

And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, And the years of thy life shall be increased.

12 If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself: And if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

13 The foolish woman is clamorous;

She is simple, and knoweth nothing.

14 And she sitteth at the door of her house,

On a seat in the high places of the city,

15 To call to them that pass by,

Who go right on their ways,

16 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither:

And as for him that is void of understanding,

she saith to him,

17 Stolen waters are sweet,

And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

18 But he knoweth not that the dead are there;

That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

#### CHAPTER X.

1 THE Proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son *is* the heaviness of his mother.

2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.

1 THE proverbs of Solomon.

A wise son maketh a glad father:

But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing:

But righteousness delivereth from death.

the writer the thought of the two was very similar, *i. e.*, that a wise man was a religious man, which is indicated by other passages as well. **10.** The verse is very similar to 1:7a. The mention of "wise man" in ver. 9 naturally suggests a statement of the fundamental necessity in wisdom. **Holy One.** The phrase is used of God also in 30:3. In general ver. 7-10 teach that admonition and instruction are of profit to those inclined to be wise, not to those hardened in sin. See further on the thought the note at the beginning of chap. 8. Ver. 11, 12 are connected closely with ver. 6. **11.** See note on 3:2. **12b.** It should be omitted. The implied object is the punishment naturally associated with evil-doing.

**13-18.** In these verses folly is personified as a woman, and, in fact, a harlot. The representation here is founded upon chap. 5 and 7, but with a difference. In those chapters there is no personification, but the harlot is chosen as one common example of folly. Here folly is personified as a harlot, a representation which corresponds to and is in contrast with the personification of wisdom in ver. 1-6 and 11, 12. It is probable that the personification of folly was suggested by the personification of wisdom. **13. Clamorous**, better, *boisterous*, as in 7:11. **The foolish woman**, render *folly*, on account of the connection of thought, especially the relation to ver. 1. **14b.** There is no reason for regarding this as describing a different place from **a**, it may be taken, therefore, simply as an indication that her house is to be regarded as in a high part of

the city. **15b** indicates that there is no intention of turning aside unto her. **16.** Substantially identical with ver. 4. **17a** is evidently an allusion to 5:15; this is put in opposition to the teaching there given. **18.** The verse is similar to 7:27 but more forcible. See note there. (See also 2:18; 5:5.) The certainty that death will come prematurely upon her guests is such that, to express the thought in the strongest possible way, they are spoken of as already dead.

**Chap. 10.** In chap. 10 to 29 there is no connected progress of thought, so that no analysis can be given. In these chapters each verse or small group of verses is independent of those about it. In 22:17 to 29 there are sometimes groups which include several verses. In 10:1 to 22:16, however, there are no such groups; each verse is separate and independent, and each consists of only two lines or members, the only apparent exception being 19:7, on which passage see note. In this section, in many cases, several verses express similar thoughts, but there is no logical order of arrangement. On this main division of the book, see further in the Introduction. According to Ewald there are the following divisions of thought: chap. 10:1 to 12:28; 13:1 to 15:19; 15:20 to 17:24; 17:25 to 19:19; 19:20 to 22:16, but there are only superficial indications of such a division.

**1a** is identical with 15:20a; **b** is similar to 15:20b; 29:3a is similar to **a**. **Maketh a glad father**, it is more literal to render, *makes glad* (his) *father*. **Heaviness**, better, *grief*. **2b** is identical with 11:4b; **a** is similar to

3 The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish : but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand : but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son : but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

6 Blessings are upon the head of the just : but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

7 The memory of the just is blessed : but the name of the wicked shall rot.

8 The wise in heart will receive commandments : but a prating fool shall fall.

9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely : but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

10 He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow : but a prating fool shall fall.

11 The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life : but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

12 Hatred stirreth up strifes : but love covereth all sins.

13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found : but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.

14 Wise men lay up knowledge : but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city : the destruction of the poor is their poverty.

3 The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish :

But he thrusteth away the desire of the wicked.

4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand :

But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son :

But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

6 Blessings are upon the head of the righteous :

But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

7 The memory of the just is blessed :

But the name of the wicked shall rot.

8 The wise in heart will receive commandments :

But a prating fool shall fall.

9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely :

But he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

10 He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow :

But a prating fool shall fall.

11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life :

But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

12 Hatred stirreth up strifes :

But love covereth all transgressions.

13 In the lips of him that hath discernment wisdom is found :

But a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.

14 Wise men lay up knowledge :

But the mouth of the foolish is a present destruction.

15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city :

The destruction of the poor is their poverty :

11 : 4a. (See also 11 : 19 ; 12 : 28.) **Treasures of wickedness**, wealth gained by wickedness. **Profit nothing**, to the man himself. **B**, as elsewhere, premature death is a punishment for sin ; **delivereth from death** means, delivers from this premature death. **3**. Similar to 13 : 25. **Soul** is here the seat of desire, as indicated by frequent usage elsewhere and by the parallelism. **B**. **Thrusteth away**, *i. e.*, disappoints. **Desire**, render literally, *evil desire*. **4**. Somewhat similar to 12 : 24. Render : *A slack hand makes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes riches*. This involves no change in the consonantal text, but a change of one vowel, reading  $\text{שָׁלַח}$ , *re'sh*, for  $\text{שָׁלַח}$ , *ra'sh*, and is favored by the fact that it follows G., S., and T. The idea may be freely expressed, the slothful make poverty, the diligent make wealth. **Hand** in both clauses is by metonymy for person. **5**. See 6 : 8. Render with R. V. Marg., *a son that does wisely*, and *a son that does shamefully*. **6**. **Blessings**. It is not necessary to restrict this to blessings which come directly from God, as the form of statement is general. It is better to regard the term as including blessings both from man and God. **Upon**, better, *for*. **B**. Render as R. V. Marg., *But the mouth of the wicked covereth violence*. It is identical with ver. 11b. The translation given affords a better meaning than that of the R. V., and is also favored by the parallelism in ver. 11. By this it is meant that there is violence in the heart of the wicked, but he strives to conceal it in his

language. **7a**. The meaning is, men invoke blessings on the righteous. **B**. **Shall rot**, *i. e.*, shall perish, be forgotten. **8a**. (See 2 : 1 ; 7 : 2.) **Will receive commandments**, will be open to instruction. **B** is identical with ver. 10b. **9a**. (See 2 : 7b.) **Surely**, better, *securely*. **B**. **Shall be known**, *i. e.*, shall be unable to conceal his evil deeds, and of course the punishment will follow. **10a** is similar to 6 : 13b ; **b**, identical with 8b. **11a** is similar to 13 : 14. (See also 18 : 4.) **B** is identical with 6b ; see rendering there. Here the parallelism is antithetic, the mouth of the wicked is only a cloak for that which injures men. **12b** is similar to 17 : 9a. **Transgressions**, not one's own but those of others, love forgives and forgets. **13b** is similar to 26 : 3b ; 19 : 29b. The antithesis of the two clauses is implied, not directly stated. The implied conclusion of **a** is : therefore no punishment is needed ; while the implied reason for **b** is : because he talks and acts foolishly. **14b** is similar to 13 : 3b ; 18 : 7. **A**. **Lay up** means store up, keep as treasure for one's own profit, and do not waste it by excessive talkativeness. In **b** by contrast the meaning is that the inconsiderate talking of fools makes them always a source of danger. **A present**, render, *imminent*. **15a** is identical with 18 : 11a, the thought there being given a different application. **B**, render, *Their poverty is the destruction of the poor* ; which means, a little more freely expressed, the poverty of the poor is their destruction. The verse points out a noteworthy fact as

16 The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.

17 He *is in* the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

18 He that hideth hatred *with* lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, *is* a fool.

19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips *is* wise.

20 The tongue of the just *is as* choice silver: the heart of the wicked *is* little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

22 The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

23 *It is* as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.

24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

25 As the whirlwind passeth, so *is* the wicked no more: but the righteous *is* an everlasting foundation.

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so *is* the sluggard to them that send him.

27 The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

28 The hope of the righteous *shall* be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.

29 The way of the Lord *is* strength to the upright: but destruction *shall be* to the workers of iniquity.

16 The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life; The increase of the wicked to sin.

17 He *is in* the way of life that heedeth correction: But he that forsaketh reproof erreth.

18 He that hideth hatred *is* of lying lips; And he that uttereth a slander *is* a fool.

19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression:

But he that refraineth his lips doeth wisely.

20 The tongue of the righteous *is as* choice silver: The heart of the wicked *is* little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many:

But the foolish die for lack of understanding.

22 The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich,

And he addeth no sorrow therewith.

23 *It is* as sport to a fool to do wickedness:

And *so is* wisdom to a man of understanding.

24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him:

And the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

25 When the whirlwind passeth, the wicked *is* no more:

But the righteous *is* an everlasting foundation.

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, So *is* the sluggard to them that send him.

27 The fear of the Lord prolongeth days:

But the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

28 The hope of the righteous *shall be* gladness:

But the expectation of the wicked shall perish.

29 The way of the Lord *is* a strong hold to the upright;

But *it is* a destruction to the workers of iniquity.

matters go in this life, viz. the value of money. **16a** is similar to 11: 19a. **Labour**, render, *acquisition*. **B. Sin**, render, *punishment*. It is the word commonly meaning sin, **חַטָּאת**, *hättāth*, but here it means *punishment as the result of sin*, a meaning favored by the parallelism, and found also in Zech. 14: 19; Num. 32: 23. **17**. The natural and probably correct rendering is: *He who heeds instruction is a way to life; but he who neglects reproof leads astray*. The thought in both clauses is the effect of one's life upon others. The thought in **a** is similar to that of ver. 11a. **18a**. The natural rendering is: *Lying lips conceal hatred*. The thought is similar to that of ver. 6b and 11b. **19**. The thought is similar to that of 13: 3; 15: 28; 17: 27a. **Refraineth**, better, *restrains*. **20**. **Heart**, better, *mind*. This verse goes on the supposition that the tongue expresses what the mind thinks. **21**. **Feed**, better, *guide*. The Hebrew word means to *tend*, as a shepherd his flock, which includes both feeding and guidance. In this connection it is the latter thought that is suggested. Note the contrast: **Righteous**—**foolish**. **22**. Another rendering proposed for **b** is: *And toil with it* (the blessing) *adds nothing*, similar to R. V. Marg. Either is possible from the Hebrew, but that of R. V. is to be preferred. The difficulty with the other rendering is not that it is contradictory to the thought of Proverbs, but rather that it is not in accordance with the usual emphasis; in the case of a good man, here considered, the thought usually emphasized is not that of opposition between human and

divine activity, but rather their unity, the human being subordinate to the divine. **23**. **Sport**, a noun from the word rendered *rejoicing* in 8: 30; for meaning see note there. **A** indicates by **as sport** the *joy* of a fool in wickedness. The thought of the *ease* with which a fool does wickedness, which many have found here, is not naturally suggested by the Hebrew word rendered *sport*. **B** means, as the rendering of the R. V. indicates, that in the same way the man of understanding has joy in wisdom. **24**. **The fear of the wicked** is the thing which the wicked fears. **25b**. In accordance with the parallelism, which is antithetic, this is to be regarded as meaning a foundation not for others but for himself; he is firmly established forever. The thought is thus similar to that of ver. 30a; 12: 7, although the phraseology is different. **26**. The prominent effects of vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes would naturally be *irritation*. This, then, is to be regarded as the point of comparison, the sluggard produces irritation in one who uses him as a messenger. **To them that send him**, it is more in accordance with Hebrew idiom to render, *to him who sends him*. **27**. (See note on 3: 2.) **28a**. The parallelism indicates that the thought is not that the hope of the righteous is a hope for pleasant things, but it is a hope that brings gladness because it is fulfilled. **29b** is identical with 21: 15b, in a somewhat different connection. **The way of the Lord** (*Jehovah*) in **a** is his course of action, his government of the world, as in Ps. 18: 30; Ezek. 18: 25. In both **a** and **b**

30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.

31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.

32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked *speaketh* frowardness.

30 The righteous shall never be removed:

But the wicked shall not dwell in the land.

31 The mouth of the righteous bringeth forth wisdom:

But the froward tongue shall be cut off.

32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable:

But the mouth of the wicked *speaketh* frowardness.

## CHAPTER XI.

1 A FALSE balance *is* abomination to the Lord: but a just weight *is* his delight.

2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly *is* wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in *their own* naughtiness.

7 When a wicked man dieth, *his* expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust *men* perisheth.

8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.

1 A FALSE balance is an abomination to the Lord:

But a just weight is his delight.

2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame:

But with the lowly is wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them:

But the perverseness of the treacherous shall destroy them.

4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath:

But righteousness delivereth from death.

5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way:

But the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them:

But they that deal treacherously shall be taken in their own mischief.

7 When a wicked man dieth, *his* expectation shall perish:

And the hope of iniquity perisheth.

8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble,

And the wicked cometh in his stead.

the meaning is clear, although the connection between subject and predicate is not altogether precise, as is quite common in Proverbs. It is, in fact, a mixture of figures to speak of "the way" as a stronghold. 30a. The thought is similar to that of ver. 25b, see note there; and to 12: 3b. 31. *Bringeth forth*, better literally, *buds with*. *Froward* (*perverse*). The rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. 32. *Speaketh frowardness* (*speaketh perverseness*). The rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. It would be more literal to render, *is perverseness*, giving substantially the same meaning.

Chap. 11. 1. Similar to 16: 11; 20: 10, 23; Lev. 19: 36; Deut. 25: 13-16. *Just*, literally, *full*, perhaps better, *correct*. 2. Similar to 18: 12; *a* is similar to 16: 18. 4b is identical with 10: 2b; *a* is similar to 10: 2a. *The day*, better, *a day*. In the nature of the case the wrath is God's, but there is no indication that any one particular occasion is meant; it is any time when God punishes. For similar prophetic teaching, see Ezek. 7: 19; Zeph. 1: 18. (See also Job 21: 30.) 5a is similar to 3: 6. Here is said of right action what is there said of God's action as the result of knowledge of him. These statements are not contradictory, but supplementary. *Shall direct*, render, *shall make smooth*. (See note on 3: 6.) Here *a* speaks of success; *b*, of failure. 6b. Render, *But the treacherous shall be captured through their own evil desire*. 7.

*Shall perish*, render, *perishes*. *Iniquity*, render, *profligates*. It is difficult to get a suitable meaning for this verse without supposing a reference to the future life. To interpret it of the expectation of a prosperous posterity seems unnatural in the absence of any indication of that meaning. It is undoubtedly true that in general the book of Proverbs gives no teaching concerning a future life except of the shadowy existence in sheol. But there are a few passages which cannot naturally be explained without bringing in the idea of a future life. It seems necessary, therefore, to say that these passages do teach a future life, although not with any fullness or explicit teaching, but rather as a hope and expectation. This is particularly true of the present passage and 14: 32, the thought of which is similar. 8a is similar to 12: 13b. *In his stead*, better, *in his place*. Does this verse mean that the wicked really suffers for the righteous the punishment that properly belongs to the righteous? This can hardly be the thought. For, according to the uniform teaching of Proverbs, there is no punishment properly belonging to the righteous. Trouble for the righteous is not punishment and therefore is necessarily fleeting. The wicked, however, is properly deserving of affliction as a punishment. Nowhere in Proverbs does trouble for the righteous or prosperity for the wicked last through life. Hence when trouble comes to the righteous, this passage teaches, it does not last, but the wicked

9 A hypocrite with *his* mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, *there is* shouting.

11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

14 Where no counsel *is*, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors *there is* safety.

15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart *for* it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure.

16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong *men* retain riches.

17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but *he that is* cruel troubleth his own flesh.

9 With his mouth the godless man destroyeth his neighbour:

But through knowledge shall the righteous be delivered.

10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth:

And when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted:

But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

12 He that despiseth his neighbour is void of wisdom:

But a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

13 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets:

But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

14 Where no wise guidance is, the people falleth:

But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it:

But he that hateth suretyship is sure.

16 A gracious woman retaineth honour:

And violent men retain riches.

17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul:

But he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

ultimately endures it in his place, *because* it properly belongs to him. See 21 : 18, where a similar thought is presented in an even stronger form. **9.** The verse can be rendered either,

*With his mouth the godless man would (seeks to) destroy his neighbor; but through (their) knowledge the righteous are delivered;* or, *With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor; but through the knowledge of the righteous men are delivered.* The former rendering means: The godless man seeks to destroy his neighbor, who is the righteous, but unsuccessfully, for the righteous delivers himself by his own knowledge.

The latter means: The godless in general does destroy his neighbors, who are not thought of as distinctively righteous or wicked; the righteous, on the other hand, delivers his fellowmen. The latter is to be preferred, chiefly because in this way the parallelism is made more precise, both clauses then having reference to the effects on others, not on themselves, of the activity of these two classes respectively. The thought thus becomes very similar to that of 12 : 6. **10, 11.** The city in both verses should be a city. **10. Shouting** is for joy. **11. Blessing of the upright.** "Of" indicates source, the blessing that comes from the words and deeds of the upright. **12. Despiset**h. The parallelism suggests plainly that this is expressed in speech, so that the meaning here is, *speaks contemptuously of*. The parallelism also suggests that the translation should be transposed so as to read, *a man lacking in understanding despises his neighbor.* **13a** is nearly the same as 20 : 19a. Render, *He who reveals (his own) secret purpose is a talebearer; but he who conceals a matter is trustworthy in spirit.* This rendering is that of V. and is favored by

the parallelism. The thought is the importance of keeping one's own counsel. He who does not keep his own counsel is nothing less than a gossip, and it is only the man who keeps his own matters to himself who is really trustworthy. The common rendering comes from a wrong idea of the word usually rendered secrets in this passage and elsewhere. It does not in any case really mean secret as such, but rather secret counsel or purpose of one or more, as is shown by the passages where it is usually translated secret (Amos. 3 : 7; Ps. 25 : 14). The only other passages where it has this meaning are two in Proverbs, 20 : 19 and 25 : 9. 20 : 19 is to be rendered: *He who reveals (his own) secret purpose is a talebearer; therefore have nothing to do with one easily enticed as to his lips, i. e., one whose lips are easily enticed to reveal his secret purpose.* "Easily enticed as to his lips" is a more probable rendering than that of the R. V., although that would give substantially the same meaning. 25 : 9 is to be rendered: *Conduct thy case with thy neighbor (alone, directly), and (thy) secret purpose do not reveal to another, let no one else know anything about it.* "He that heareth" of 25 : 10 is the same person as "another" of ver. 9, the one to whom he tells the matter. **14b** is identical with 24 : 6b. The thought is the same as in 15 : 22; 20 : 18. **15.** See especially 6 : 1-5 and note there. **A,** render, *If one is surety for another he shall surely suffer.* **Sure,** better, *secure.* This rendering makes **a** as well as **b** a general statement condemning all suretyship. This is favored by the parallelism and also by the thought elsewhere. **16. Retaineth . . . retain.** *Obtaineth . . . obtain,* the rendering of the A. R. V., is better. The verse means, violence may win the



18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work : but to him that soweth righteousness *shall be a sure reward*.

19 As righteousness *tendeth to life*; so he that pursueth evil *pursueth it to his own death*.

20 They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord : but *such as are upright in their way are his delight*.

21 *Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished*; but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

23 The desire of the righteous is only good : but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it *tendeth to poverty*.

25 The liberal soul shall be made fat : and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him ; but blessing *shall be upon the head of him that selleth it*.

27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour ; but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall : but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind : and the fool *shall be servant to the wise of heart*.

18 The wicked earneth deceitful wages : But he that soweth righteousness *hath a sure reward*.

19 He that is stedfast in righteousness *shall attain unto life* : And he that pursueth evil *doeth it to his own death*.

20 They that are perverse in heart are an abomination to the Lord : But such as are perfect in *their way are his delight*.

21 *Though hand join in hand, the evil man shall not be unpunished* : But the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, So is a fair woman which is without discretion.

23 The desire of the righteous is only good : But the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

24 There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more ; And there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it *tendeth only to want*.

25 The liberal soul shall be made fat : And he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him ; But blessing *shall be upon the head of him that selleth it*.

27 He that diligently seeketh good seeketh favour : But he that searcheth after mischief, it shall come unto him.

28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall : But the righteous shall flourish as the green leaf.

29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind : And the foolish shall be servant to the wise of heart.

lesser things, riches, but it cannot the greater, honor. 18. Omit **hath** in **b**, the force of **earneth** continuing. **Sure**, better *real*, *i. e.*, enduring, while the prosperity of the wicked is deceitful, *i. e.*, it seems to be enduring but is not. 19 may be rendered freely: *If one is stealfast in righteousness (it tends) to life; and if one pursues evil (it tends) to his death.* 21a is nearly identical with 16 : 5b. **Though hand join in hand**, יָדָהּ יָדָהּ, *yādh l'yādh*, render simply, *assuredly*. The idiom is a peculiar one, but this is its most probable meaning. The parallelism suggests that **seed** in **b** does not mean *posterity* but *race*, so that **the seed of the righteous** is equivalent to a race consisting of righteous, the righteous as a class, like a *seed of evil-doers* (Isa. 1 : 4 ; see also 65 : 25). 22. **Jewel**. *Ring*, the rendering of the A. R. V., is better. A gold ring in the nose was an ornament that was often used. The thought is that as such a beautiful ornament is incongruous on swine, being used for an ordinary ring, so is physical beauty incongruous when joined with an unattractive character. It is more literal to render **b**, *So is a woman (who is) fair but without discretion*. 23. Same thought as in 10 : 28. **Good** and **wrath** indicate respectively not what is the quality of the desires, but their result. "Wrath" is wrath of God. 24. **Scattereth**, spends liberally. It

is implied rather than stated that the spending is to some extent benevolent. **More than is meet**, better, *what is due*. 25. **Watereth**, not the ordinary word, but one which means *to give to drink to satiety*, הִרְוָה, *hīrwā*. It is probably a form of the same word in **watered**. 26. **Corn** (*grain*), the rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. This refers to times of famine, which were not uncommon in Palestine, when many who had grain would refuse to sell in order to hold it for still higher prices. This indicated an inordinate greed and a disregard of the sufferings of one's fellow-men. **Withholdeth** means thus, *refuses to sell*. 27a is similar to 8 : 35b. Omit **diligently**. The connection with **good** as well as the parallelism would suggest that by **favour** is meant the favor of God. The thought of **a** is, then, that one who seeks that which is morally good is by that very fact seeking the favor of God. It is of course implied that he obtains it. **Mischief** in **b** is to be understood of moral evil, and the following **it** refers to the implied result of evil, viz, disaster, punishment. 28b. (See Ps. 1 : 3.) 29a. Some have thought that **troubleth his own house** here means, brings into confusion his own household affairs, his business matters. But it is preferable to regard "house" as used in the meaning *household, family* for several reasons. One is that the verb here used every-

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life;

And he that is wise winneth souls.

31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth:

How much more the wicked and the sinner!

## CHAPTER XII.

1 WHOSO loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

2 A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will be condemn.

3 A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

6 The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.

7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.

9 He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

1 WHOSO loveth correction loveth knowledge:

But he that hateth reproof is brutish.

2 A good man shall obtain favor of the Lord:

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But the house of the righteous shall stand.

8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom:

But he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.

9 Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant,

Than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

where else takes an object really personal. Connected with this is the fact that the verb nowhere else has the meaning assigned to it here on the former view. Another reason is that the meaning is *household* in 15 : 27, where the same Hebrew phrase occurs, וְיָרֵךְ בֵּיתוֹ, 'ōkhēr bēthō. "Troubleth" is hardly strong enough for the verb; it usually means, *brings disaster upon*. The meaning of **a**, then, is: he who by his misconduct brings disaster upon his own household will himself suffer by loss of property. **Inherit**, render, *possess*. **30a**. Note the incongruity of the figure. (See 18 : 4.) **Tree of life**. (See note on 3 : 18.) **B**, *winneth*, literally, *takes*, וְיָרֵךְ, lōqē(ā)h. This is an unusual form of expression, but, in harmony with **a**, it may be understood to mean, *takes to himself, wins*, as in 6 : 25, *souls*, i. e., persons; he so influences them that they follow in the same course as the wise man himself, i. e., the path of wisdom. **31a** lays down the general rule, which is the uniform teaching of Proverbs. In connection with it **b** would not necessarily assert that there are exceptions to it. It does recognize at any rate the possibility of such exceptions, and calls attention to the fact that they do not interfere with justice for the wicked, that is even more sure. **Recompensed** is used here with reference both to rewarding the good and punishing the evil.

**Chap. 12.** 2a is similar to 8 : 35b. **Con-**

**demn** is a legal term, it means *pronounce guilty*. **3b** is similar to ver. 12b. The thought of the verse is expressed in a different form in 10 : 25. **4a**. (See 31 : 10; Ruth 3 : 11.) **Virtuous (worthy)**; the rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. **A** means she brings him to honor and position. **B**. **That maketh ashamed**, render, *that does shamefully*. (See 10 : 5b.) **Rot-tenness in his bones**. The Hebrew phrase is similar to that in 14 : 30b. (See also note on 3 : 8.) **5**. **Thoughts**, better, *plans*. **6a**. The thought is more fully expressed in 1 : 11-19. **Are of lying in wait**, render, *are a lying in wait*, which means, *lie in wait*. **B**. **Shall deliver**, better, according to the parallelism, *delivers*. **Them in b** refers not to a single word in **a** but to the general idea, viz, those brought into peril by the wicked. The thought of the verse is similar to that of 11 : 9. **7**. For thought see 10 : 25. **8**. **Wisdom**. The thought would perhaps be better expressed by *intelligence*. **Heart**, render, *mind*. What is commended in this verse is good sense, clear judgment. **9**. **Servant**, better, *slave*. **And in a** means *and yet*. **B**. **Honoureth himself**, better, *makes himself great*, i. e., plays the great man. The thought is concerning social standing, comfort is better than show. **Better** means not morally better, but is *in a preferable condition*. **10**. **Render**, *A righteous man knows the feelings of his beast: but the heart of the wicked is cruel*. **A** is explained by Exod. 23 : 9, where the Hebrew

11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread : but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men : but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

13 The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips : but the just shall come out of trouble.

14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth ; and the recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.

15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes : but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

16 A fool's wrath is presently known : but a prudent man covereth shame.

17 He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness : but a false witness deceit.

18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword : but the tongue of the wise is health.

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever : but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil : but to the counsellors of peace is joy.

21 There shall no evil happen to the just : but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.

11 He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread :

But he that followeth after vain persons is void of understanding.

12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men :

But the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

13 In the transgression of the lips is a snare to the

evil man :

But the righteous shall come out of trouble.

14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth :

And the doings of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.

15 The way of the foolish is right in his own eyes :

But he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel.

16 A fool's vexation is presently known :

But a prudent man concealeth shame.

17 He that uttereth truth sheweth forth righteousness.

But a false witness deceit.

18 There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword :

But the tongue of the wise is health.

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever :

But a lying tongue is but for a moment.

20 Deceit is in the heart of them that devise evil :

But to the counsellors of peace is joy.

21 There shall no mischief happen to the righteous :

But the wicked shall be filled with evil.

phrase is the same, *וְיָדָע לֵב אֲרָמִי*, *yādā' nēphēsh*, where the rendering of the R. V. is: *For ye know the heart of a stranger (sojourner)*. "Know" implies also have consideration for. The thought, then, is not directly of care for the life, but of merciful or cruel treatment. The phraseology is the same in 29 : 7a. **11a** is identical with 28 : 19a, and **b** is similar in both. **Vain persons**, better, *vain things, i. e.*, plans for becoming rich more quickly than by honest toil. This points to a time when agriculture was the common occupation, so that it is spoken of as the type of honest labor. **12a**. Render, *A wicked man desires the prey of wickedness, i. e.*, he desires unjustly gotten gain. **B**. **Yieldeth fruit** should probably be rendered, *is enduring*, with a slight change in the Hebrew text, following G. and T., reading *יָרָם*, *'ēthān*, for *יָרָם*, *yittēn*. The MT. does not naturally give a good meaning. It is naturally implied in **a** that the unjustly gotten gain is not an enduring possession, which affords a contrast with the endurance of the root of the righteous. **13**. Similar to 29 : 6 ; **b**, similar to 11 : 8a. The thought of **a** is that a wicked man is snared by his own words. **B** is in contrast with **a** but is more general—the righteous comes forth from trouble in general. **14a**. Good words of course benefit others ; it is here stated that they also benefit the man himself. The thought of this particular case in which a man receives a reward according to his acts is generalized in **b** to a statement of the doctrine so often stated in the Old Testament ; a man is recompensed in accordance with his acts, good or evil. It is also explicitly recognized in the

New Testament, as in Gal. 6 : 7. This teaching is further stated in 13 : 2 ; 18 : 20 ; 14 : 14 ; 22 : 8. **A** here is nearly identical with **a** in 13 : 2 ; 18 : 20. In all these passages it is not *direct* recompense from God that is meant, but that which comes through one's fellow-men. **15a** is somewhat similar to 3 : 7a. It is of course evident that this way is in reality wrong, and it is also necessarily implied that the fool refuses to heed advice. The latter thought is the basis of contrast with **b**. **16**. **Presently**, better, *at once* ; literally, *on that day*. The verse counsels calmness in the face of provocation, such as insult, etc. **17b** is similar to 14 : 5b, 25b. **B** refers to a court of justice, which makes it probable that the same is true of **a**. In that case **he that uttereth truth** would be a true witness. Such a one **showeth forth righteousness, i. e.**, causes justice to be known, helps to establish it. **B** teaches that on the other hand a false witness is helping to establish deceit. Deceit does not mean injustice, although the parallelism would be more precise if it did. Deceit and injustice are naturally associated, however, as in Ps. 43 : 1, so that there is without doubt an implication of injustice in the word. The teaching of the verse is concerning the effect of testimony in court, a true witness is helping to establish justice, and a false witness deceit. The interpretation here given is confirmed by the meaning of the similar passage, 14 : 25. This interpretation gives more meaning than the one adopted by many, that a witness will testify according to his character. **18**. **Health**, render, *healing*, and see 4 : 22b. **21**. The verse is similar to Ps. 32 : 10. **Evil**,

- 22 Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.  
 23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.  
 24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.  
 25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad.  
 26 The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.  
 27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.  
 28 In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

- 22 Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord: But they that deal truly are his delight.  
 23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: But the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.  
 24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: But the slothful shall be put under taskwork.  
 25 Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop; But a good word maketh it glad.  
 26 The righteous is a guide to his neighbour: But the way of the wicked causeth them to err.  
 27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: But the precious substance of men is to the diligent.  
 28 In the way of righteousness is life; And in the pathway thereof there is no death.

## CHAPTER XIII.

- 1 A WISE son heareth his father's instruction; but a scorners heareth not rebuke.  
 2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.  
 3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.  
 4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.  
 5 A righteous man hateth lying; but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.  
 6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.  
 7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

- 1 A WISE son heareth his father's instruction: But a scorners heareth not rebuke.  
 2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: But the soul of the treacherous shall eat violence.  
 3 He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life: But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.  
 4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.  
 5 A righteous man hateth lying: But a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.  
 6 Righteousness guardeth him that is upright in the way: But wickedness overthroweth the sinner.  
 7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth.

render, *misfortune*, it is physical, not moral evil that is meant. This verse presents the general view of life in Proverbs, the good prosper, the bad suffer. **22.** The same general thought is found in 10: 31, 32; 12: 19; 13: 5; 16: 13; 20: 23; see also 11: 20. **23b** is similar to 13: 16b. It would be pushing the teaching of this verse to an unwarranted extreme to suppose that it means that a prudent man does not communicate knowledge at all. It does mean, forcibly expressed, that he is careful about it; that as a general rule he keeps silent, but the fool speaks. **24.** A somewhat similar thought in 10: 4. **25.** (See 15: 13; 17: 22.) **Heaviness**, render, *anxiety*. **Maketh it stoop**, perhaps better, *bows it down*. **Good**, the meaning in this connection seems to be *kind*. **26.** The meaning of the verse is much disputed. The most probable meaning, without change of the consonantal text, is given by the rendering of **a**: *The righteous searches out his friend*. This means that he studies, examines his friend, the result of which must be that he is able to assist him, to lead him in the right way. This implied thought forms the basis of an antithetic parallelism which is not very close, the righteous leads his friend aright, the wicked leads himself astray. **27.** Render, *A slothful man catches not his prey; but the precious substance of men is to be*

*diligent*. **A** indicates that a slothful man is unsuccessful even in his hunting; **b**, that to be diligent is in itself a precious treasure, and of course brings success. **28b.** The rendering of R. V. is not in accordance with Hebrew idiom; change one vowel, reading  $\text{לֵךְ}$ , 'el for  $\text{לֵךְ}$ , 'al, and render, *but a byway (leads) unto death*. "Byway" means the way of sin, the parallelism is antithetic. The Hebrew phrase translated "byway" does not occur elsewhere, but the meaning given is in accordance with analogy.

**Chap. 13.** **2a** is nearly identical with 12: 14a. (See also 18: 20a.) **Man** means of course a good man. **B.** Render, *But the desire of the treacherous is violence*, nearly as in R. V. Marg. This translation, while less in harmony with the parallelism, gives in itself the better meaning. "Desire" means, by metonymy, object of desire. "Violence" is of course that done to others. The meaning of **b** is that the real desire of the wicked is for violence. **3b** is similar to 10: 14b; 18: 7a. **4.** **Soul** in both clauses means the seat of desire. **6.** **The way**, omit *the*. "Way," as often, means *course of life*. **7.** **Maketh himself rich . . . maketh himself poor**, render, *feigns himself rich . . . feigns himself poor*. **A.** (See 12: 9b.) **A** shows hypocritical ostentation; **b**, hypocritical miserliness. The lesson

8 The ransom of a man's life are his riches : but the poor heareth not rebuke.

9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth : but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

10 Only by pride cometh contention : but with the well advised is wisdom.

11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished : but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick : but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

13 Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed : but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

14 The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

15 Good understanding giveth favour : but the way of transgressors is hard.

16 Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge : but a fool layeth open his folly.

8 The ransom of a man's life is his riches :

But the poor heareth no threatening.

9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth :

But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

10 By pride cometh only contention :

But with the well advised is wisdom.

11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished :

But he that gathereth by labour shall have increase.

12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick :

But when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

13 Whoso despiseth the word bringeth destruction

on himself :

But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

14 The law of the wise is a fountain of life,

To depart from the snares of death.

15 Good understanding giveth favour :

But the way of the treacherous is rugged.

16 Every prudent man worketh with knowledge :

But a fool spreadeth out folly.

of the verse is, Be sincere. **8. Threatening.** The word so translated, רָחַץ, *g'ārā*, commonly means *rebuke*, as in ver. 1. The meaning "threatening" is shown especially by Isa. 30 : 17, where A. R. V. translates *threat*, and it manifestly refers to a threatened attack. Here the thought is the same, threatened attack, and the meaning is that the poor does not **hear**, *i. e.*, *heed*, as in ver. 1 and often, any threatened attack because he knows he has nothing of which to be robbed. The **ransom of a** is most naturally, especially from the parallelism, a ransom paid to robbers. The meaning of the verse is: A rich man escapes with his life from robbers, but by a loss of property; the poor man has no occasion to fear them. It is an illustration of the law of compensation, a poor man escapes some of the dangers of the rich. **9b** is identical with 24 : 20b, except for the conjunction here. (See also 20 : 20, and Job 18 : 5, 6.) **Rejoiceth**, *i. e.*, burns brightly, a natural use of metaphorical language. The passages in Proverbs in which lamp or light is used metaphorically are, besides the present passage, 20 : 20 and 24 : 20, but not 31 : 18; see note there. It is probable that in all these passages the idea is general, being suggested by the common and natural association of light with comfort and prosperity; so that light in this metaphorical use signifies prosperity, and the quenching of a light, adversity. These ideas are found in the two clauses of this verse. This explanation of the meaning is better than to attempt to connect the meaning with any special customs of the Jews, the existence of which is doubtful. (See note on 31 : 18.) **10a.** Render, *By pride one causes only contention.* **B.** **The well advised**, better, *those who receive advice.* **11. By vanity.** This gives no suitable meaning here. It is therefore better to transpose two consonants, giving רָחַץ, *mēbhōhāl*, for רָחַץ, *mēhēbhēl*, following the reading of G. and

V., and render, *in haste*; the thought is then similar to that of 20 : 21 and 28 : 22. It is here implied, as in those passages, that such wealth is obtained by illegitimate means. **By labor**, render, *gradually*. Here it is implied, on the other hand, that such gathering is in accordance with legitimate methods. **12b** is similar to 19a. Render **b**: *But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.* "Fulfilled" is literally, *which has come to pass.* **Tree of life.** (See note on 3 : 18.) **13. The word** is the divine word. (See 16 : 20.) **Commandment**, this also is from God. (See 19 : 16.) **14.** The verse is similar to 14 : 27; **b** is identical in both; **a** is similar to 10 : 11a. **Law**, render, *teaching*, and see note on 1 : 8. **B** does not indicate directly purpose or result, it is rather an expansion of the predicate of **a**. **Fountain of life** is, it is said, a means by which one may escape the snares of death. **Snares of death.** The phrase occurs also in Ps. 18 : 5. The word "snares" presupposes a hunter, who, if mentioned, must here be death. It is probable, therefore, that by "snares of death" are meant the snares set by death, personified as a hunter. It is also true, however, that the snares result in death. **15a** is similar to 3 : 4, and somewhat also to 12 : 8a. **Giveth**. This means gives to one favor in the sight of others; it is thus practically about equivalent to *wins*. **Is rugged** (*is hard*). This is not a literal rendering of the Hebrew text, which can only mean, *is permanent*, which gives no meaning here. It seems necessary to change slightly the text of one word, reading אֲדָמָה, *'ēdhām*, for אֲדָמָה, *'ēthān*, following G., and render, *is their destruction*. This means, brings destruction to them. This affords a suitable meaning, as well as a contrast to **a**. **16a.** Render, *A prudent man does everything with knowledge.* This does not require a change in the order of words in the Hebrew, as some suppose. **B. Spreadeth out** (*flaunteth*), the

17 A wicked messenger falleth into mischief : but a faithful ambassador is health.

18 Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction : but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul : but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise : but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

21 Evil pursueth sinners : but to the righteous good shall be repaid.

22 A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children ; and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

23 Much food is in the tillage of the poor : but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.

24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son ; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul : but the belly of the wicked shall want.

17 A wicked messenger falleth into evil :

But a faithful ambassador is health.

18 Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth correction :

But he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul : But it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.

20 Walk with wise men, and thou shalt be wise :

But the companion of fools shall smart for it.

21 Evil pursueth sinners :

But the righteous shall be recompensed with good.

22 A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children ;

And the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the righteous.

23 Much food is in the tillage of the poor :

But there is that is destroyed by reason of injustice.

24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son :

But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul : But the belly of the wicked shall want.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

1 EVERY wise woman buildeth her house : but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord : but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

1 EVERY wise woman buildeth her house :

But the foolish plucketh it down with her own hands.

2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord :

But he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

rendering of the A. R. V. is the better ; it means *makes a display of*. On **b**, see 12 : 23b ; 15 : 2b.

**17a.** *Falleth*, render, *plunges* (one), reading לַדְּ=יִפְּוֹל, for לַדְּ=יִפְּוֹל. This requires no change in the consonantal text, and is favoured by the parallelism. It has reference to the effect of a bad messenger not on himself, but on the one who sends him. **B.** (See 25 : 13.)

**Health**, render, *healing*, i. e., comfort, refreshment, coming from success. **18.** The verse is similar to 15 : 32. **19a** is similar to ver. 12b.

**B.** (See 29 : 27b.) **The desire**, better, *a desire*.

**But**, render, *and*. **B** may be regarded as giving a specific example of the general fact of **a**,

stated from the other side, a fool clings to his desire, which is evil. **20.** *Walk with* means

*associate with*. **Be wise**, better, *become wise*.

**Smart for it**, better, *suffer*, as in 11 : 15a.

**21.** *Evil*, better, *misfortune*. **B.** Render, *But he recompenses the righteous with good*.

"He" refers to God. "Good" means good fortune, prosperity. **22b.** For thought see

28 : 8 ; Job 27 : 16 f. **23.** Render, *The great man eats of the newly tilled land of the poor ;*

*and wealth is accumulated by injustice*. This translation involves two changes of vowels,

but no changes in consonants in the Hebrew text, reading רַב־אֶחָד, *rābh 'ōkhād*, for רַב־אֶחָד, *rābh 'ōkhād*.<sup>1</sup>

The rendering of **a** is substantially that of T., that of **b**, of Fr. This rendering

has the advantage of giving, without change of the consonantal text, a good connected mean-

ing to the verse, which can not be made out of MT. The thought in **a** is that the great ones

oppress the poor, eating even the product of the land which they have just begun to cultivate,

and in **b** a more general thought of the same kind is presented, that wealth is often gathered

by injustice. The parallelism may be called synonyms. It is a statement of what is seen

by observation, without express comment ; the thought is somewhat similar to that of 14 : 31.

**24.** The verse is similar to 23 : 13 ; 29 : 15 ; Eccles. 30 : 1 f. **Spare** means *withholds*, does

not use at all. The meaning of **a** is that a son who is not chastened is sure to grow up to be

bad, so that a parent who does not punish is really seeking to injure his son. There is proba-

bly no direct reference to the infliction of death on a disobedient son, which is mentioned in

such passages as Deut. 21 : 18-21. **B** gives the antithesis to **a**. **25.** The verse is similar to

10 : 3 ; Ps. 34 : 10 ; 37 : 25. **Soul** is used here in the meaning of appetite, seat of desire.

**Chap. 14. 1.** On **a** see 24 : 3. **Every wise woman**, render, *the wisdom of women*. **The**

**foolish**, render, *the folly*, i. e., of women. The thought is the result of the labors of a wise

woman in promoting the prosperity of her household and of a foolish woman in destroying

it. The verse gives great prominence to women, but not more so than 12 : 4 ; 31 : 10-31. **2.** The

verse makes religion and morality inevitably

<sup>1</sup> See "American Journal of Semitic Languages," Vol. XIX., p. 53 f.

3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

7 Go into the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.

10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.

14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: But the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: But much increase is by the strength of the ox.

5 A faithful witness will not lie: But a false witness uttereth lies.

6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: But knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

7 Go into the presence of a foolish man, And thou shalt not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way:

But the folly of fools is deceit.

9 The foolish make a mock at guilt: But among the upright there is good will.

10 The heart knoweth its own bitterness; And a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy.

11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: But the tent of the upright shall flourish.

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; And the end of mirth is heaviness.

14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways:

And a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

15 The simple believeth every word: But the prudent man looketh well to his going.

16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: But the fool beareth himself insolently, and is confident.

connected. **3. A rod of pride** (*rod for his pride*), render, *a shoot of pride*. The word translated "shoot," הֹטֵר, *hōtēr*, occurs elsewhere only in Isa. 11 : 1. The meaning is that the language of the fool is proud, it is a shoot springing from the stock of pride in his heart. **Them** refers to the wise; in the similar passages 12 : 6, 18, on the other hand, the reference is to the effect on others. **4a** probably means that one who has no cattle saves the expense of providing for them; **b**, that, on the other hand, cattle are a source of income. **A** is to be regarded as in reality concessive without the formal expression, the meaning being: although this is the case, yet. The verse is addressed to those who might think it an advantage not to be obliged to provide fodder for cattle; they are admonished to remember the other side of the case. **5**. The verse is similar to 12 : 17. (See also 6 : 19 ; 14 : 25 ; 19 : 5.) The thought here is that a man testifies according to his character; 12 : 17 expresses more than that; see note there. **6**. The seeking in **a** is manifestly external not real, it is for some advantage that may be gained, and does not begin with the fear of God. The thought is similar to that of 1 : 28; see note there. **7**. Render, *Go forth from the presence of a foolish man, since thou hast not perceived in him lips of knowledge*. This is the natural rendering of the verse, and gives the best meaning. This makes the verse an admonition to avoid the society of fools. **8**. **Deceit** probably means *self-deceit*. **9a**. Render with R. V., not A. R. V. **Among in b** indicates that by **good will** is meant the *mutual*

favor of men to each other, otherwise it would naturally mean the favor of God. The thought of the verse then is, the foolish continually incur guilt by their treatment of their fellow-men, and care not for it; the upright escape guilt by mutual good will. **10b**. Render, *and another cannot share its joy*. **11**. The verse is very similar to 12 : 7. **12**. The verse is identical with 16 : 25; a similar thought is found in 5 : 5 f; 7 : 27; 12 : 28; see note on last passage. **Way** is singular in form, but really plural in meaning, as is often the case; there are some such ways, some courses of action. **13. Is sorrowful**, render, *may be sorrowful*. The rendering of R. V. is equally possible, but such a general statement does not accord with the facts of life, nor with the cheerful view of life ordinarily presented in Proverbs. As translated above the thought is that in many cases there is an undercurrent of sorrow in the midst of laughter. **Mirth**, render, *the mirth, i. e.*, such mirth as is spoken of in **a**. Eccl. 7 : 3 gives a contrast to the thought of the verse. **14**. Render, *One perverted in heart shall be sated from his own ways; and a good man from his own deeds*. This rendering involves a slight change of text in one word, which is demanded by the parallelism and general thought, reading מִן־מַעַלְלָיו, *mīn-mā'ālāw*, for מִן־עֲלָוֵי, *mīn-ālāw*. "One perverted in heart" means one whose heart is turned away from God. The force of "shall be sated" is a continues to **b**. The thought of both is, a man receives a full return for his deeds. **15a** shows undue credulity, **b** wise cautiousness. **16**

17 *He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly* : and a man of wicked devices is hated.

18 The simple inherit folly : but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

19 The evil bow before the good ; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour : but the rich hath many friends.

21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth : but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

22 Do they not err that devise evil ? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.

23 In all labour there is profit : but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

24 The crown of the wise is their riches : but the foolishness of fools is folly.

25 A true witness delivereth souls : but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.

26 In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence ; and his children shall have a place of refuge.

27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

28 In the multitude of people is the king's honour : but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.

29 *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding* : but *he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly*.

30 A sound heart is the life of the flesh : but envy the rottenness of the bones.

31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker : but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness : but the righteous hath hope in his death.

33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath

17 He that is soon angry will deal foolishly : And a man of wicked devices is hated.

18 The simple inherit folly :

But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

19 The evil bow before the good ;

And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour :

But the rich hath many friends.

21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth :

But he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he.

22 Do they not err that devise evil ?

But mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.

23 In all labour there is profit :

But the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

24 The crown of the wise is their riches :

But the folly of fools is only folly.

25 A true witness delivereth souls :

But he that uttereth lies causeth deceit.

26 In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence :

And his children shall have a place of refuge.

27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,

To depart from the snares of death.

28 In the multitude of people is the king's glory :

But in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.

29 He that is slow to anger is of great understanding :

But he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

30 A sound heart is the life of the flesh :

But envy is the rottenness of the bones.

31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker :

But he that hath mercy on the needy honoureth him.

32 The wicked is thrust down in his evil-doing :

But the righteous hath hope in his death.

33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding :

**Faith.** The object is not stated, and therefore is probably to be regarded as general, but with especial reference to God. **Evil** here is moral evil, evil actions. The thought is similar to that of 3 : 7 and 16 : 6. **The fool**, better, a fool. **Confident**, *i. e.*, self-confident. 17. Both clauses are unfavorable, the second being stronger than the first. (See 10 : 18.) 18. **Inherit**, render, *possess*. **Are crowned with**, render, *hold fast*, the literal meaning being *surround*. 19. Supply *are* after **wicked** in *b*. The plural **gates** suggests a palace, as in 8 : 34. **A** indicates submission in general of the evil to the good ; **b**, more specifically, that they come to them as suppliants to the gates of a palace. 20. The verse is very similar to 19 : 4. **B**. It is more literal to render, *But the friends of the rich are many*, which expresses the same thought. 21a is similar in thought to Lev. 19 : 18. **Neighbor**. The context, especially the parallelism, shows that he is thought of as poor. 22a is a rhetorical question implying the answer *surely*, as in 8 : 1. 23. **In**, better, *for*, *i. e.*, as the reward for. **Profit**, better, *gain*. 24b. It is implied that this is in spite of riches. 25. The verse is similar to 12 : 17. **Delivereth souls**, render, *saves lives*, *i. e.*, saves the innocent from being put to death unjustly. **B**. It is implied by the parallelism that as a consequence of the deceit men are put to death unjustly. 26b is

similar to 13 : 22a ; 20 : 7 ; Exod. 20 : 5. **His**. The antecedent is not any word expressed, but is the implied actor in *a*, the one in whom is the fear of Jehovah. 27. The verse is similar to 13 : 14, *b* being identical in both. 29. **Exalteth**, better, *carries*, bears it about continually. 30. **A sound heart** (*a tranquil heart*), better, *a tranquil mind*. **Envy**, the parallelism indicates that it is better to give the more general meaning *passion*. **Bones**. (See note on 3 : 8.) 31a is nearly identical with 17 : 5a. (See also 22 : 2 ; Job 31 : 15.) **B** is similar to 19 : 17a. **His Maker**. "His" refers probably to the poor rather than to the oppressor, the thought being that injury to the poor is really injury done to God who created him. 32. **Evil-doing**, render, *calamity*. **A** means that in the time of calamity the wicked is overthrown, there is no further hope for him. **Hath hope** (*hath a refuge*). The rendering of the A. R. V. is the better, although the meaning is about the same. The thought is that he has a hope, and also a sure basis for it. According to general usage this means a hope in God. This could only be in reference to the future life, which is therefore the reference here, as previously in 11 : 7, where see note. The change of text by some, to avoid the reference to the future life, is unnecessary. 33. In comparison with *a* see 10 : 14 ; with *b*, 13 : 16b and 15 : 2b ; and with the verse as a



understanding : but *that which is* in the midst of fools is made known.

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation : but sin is a reproach to any people.

35 The king's favour *is* toward a wise servant : but his wrath is *against* him that causeth shame.

But *that which is* in the inward part of fools is made known.

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation :

But sin is a reproach to any people.

35 The king's favour is toward a servant that deal-eth wisely :

But his wrath shall be *against* him that causeth shame.

## CHAPTER XV.

1 A SOFT answer turneth away wrath : but grievous words stir up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright : but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life : but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction : but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure : but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge : but the heart of the foolish doeth not so.

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord : but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord : but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

10 Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way : and he that hateth reproof shall die.

11 Hell and destruction are before the Lord ; how much more then the hearts of the children of men ?

1 A SOFT answer turneth away wrath :

But a grievous word stirreth up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright :

But the mouth of fools poureth out folly.

3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Keeping watch upon the evil and the good.

4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life :

But perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit.

5 A fool despiseth his father's correction :

But he that regardeth reproof getteth prudence.

6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure :

But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge :

But the heart of the foolish doeth not so.

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord :

But the prayer of the upright is his delight.

9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord :

But he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

10 There is grievous correction for him that forsaketh the way :

And he that hateth reproof shall die.

11 Hell and Abaddon are before the Lord :

How much more then the hearts of the children of men !

whole, 12 : 23. Render, *Wisdom rests in an intelligent heart ; but is made known in the inward part of fools.* The subject in **b** can only be "wisdom" from **a**. The contrast is in the words "rests" and "is made known" ; the meaning of the verse is, then, that a wise man keeps wisdom in his heart, he himself keeps silent, while a fool is continually talking and proclaiming it. The chief difficulty is in the use of the word wisdom in reference to a fool, a difficulty which is removed, however, by regarding it as used subjectively ; it is what the fool regards as wisdom. The contrast is between the silence of the wise and the talkativeness of fools. There is no difficulty here sufficiently great to make it necessary to change the text, as some have thought. **35b**. Render, *but his wrath is he that does shamefully.* "Wrath" here means by metonymy *object of wrath*.

**Chap. 15. 1b.** (See note on 6 : 14c.) **2.** (See 16 : 23.) **A** is similar to ver. 7a. **3.** The verse is similar to 5 : 21 (see note), Ps. 33 : 13-15. This verse is intended as a warning to evil-doers. **4. Wholesome (gentle).** The rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. Perhaps better yet is *soothing*. **A tree of life.** (See note on 3 : 18.) **5. Getteth prudence,** better, *acts*

*prudently.* **6a**, it is better to render literally, *The house of the righteous is much treasure*, which means, by metonymy, is a place of much treasure. **B** is similar in thought to ver. 27 ; 10 : 2a ; 11 : 4a. **Trouble.** The antithesis is not quite exact, but it is not necessary to change the text of this word in order to make it more exact, as some have done. (See 11 : 29 ; 15 : 21.) **7a** is similar to ver. 2a ; 10 : 31a. **Doeth not so** is a tame conclusion. Render, *is not right*, *i. e.*, does not itself have the right tendency and so cannot guide and help others. **8a** is similar to 28 : 9 ; 21 : 27 ; Isa. 1 : 11 f. ; **b** to 29b ; 11 : 20 ; 12 : 22. It is difficult not to think that prayer and sacrifice are here used as nearly synonymous, although they could hardly be entirely so. Sacrifice and prayer are often associated, prayer accompanying sacrifice. Hence it is probable that here sacrifice speaks of one part and prayer of another, of the same general act of worship. Sacrifice is mentioned elsewhere in Proverbs in 7 : 14 ; 17 : 1 ; 21 : 3, 27. **10. Grievous correction.** The parallelism indicates that this is another phrase for *death*. **The way, i. e.**, the right way, the way of life. (See 2 : 13 ; 10 : 17 ; 5 : 6 ; 15 : 24 ; 8 : 20 ; 12 : 28.) **B.** (See 5 : 23 ; 10 : 17, 27.) The teaching is that untimely death follows sin. **11a.** Very similar

12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.

13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

15 All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

16 Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

19 The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

21 Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

24 The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

12 A scorner loveth not to be reproved:

He will not go unto the wise.

13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: But by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.

14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge:

But the mouth of fools feedeth on folly.

15 All the days of the afflicted are evil:

But he that is of a cheerful heart hath a continual feast.

16 Better is little with the fear of the Lord, Than great treasure and trouble therewith.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

18 A wrathful man stirreth up contention: But he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

19 The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns:

But the path of the upright is made an high way.

20 A wise son maketh a glad father:

But a foolish man despiseth his mother.

21 Folly is joy to him that is void of wisdom:

But a man of understanding maketh straight his going.

22 Where there is no counsel, purposes are disappointed:

But in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

23 A man hath joy in the answer of his mouth:

And a word in due season, how good is it!

24 To the wise the way of life goeth upward,

That he may depart from Sheol beneath.

phraseology is found in Job 26 : 6; see also Ps. 139 : 8, 11 f.; 38 : 9. **Sheol** is here used as the strongest expression for a place unknown to men. **Abaddon**. The word means, literally, *destruction*. It is always used as a descriptive term, synonymous with "Sheol." **B** is similar to Jer. 17 : 10; Ps. 38 : 9; see also Prov. 25 : 3. **12b** is the result of **a. 13**. **Heart** in both clauses has the somewhat uncommon meaning of the seat of the emotions; so in ver. 15. **Spirit** has here the same meaning as sometimes in English—*courage, resolution*. **14a** is very similar to 18 : 15a. Render **a**, *An intelligent mind seeks knowledge*. **B. Feedeth on**, render, *is occupied with, i. e.*, in its utterance. **15. The afflicted**, here better, *one in trouble*. **Evil**, here not in the ethical sense, but meaning *hard, burdensome*. **Heart**. (See note on ver. 13.) **16**. The verse is similar to 16 : 8; 17 : 1; Ps. 37 : 16. Here and in ver. 17 there is no intimation that riches generally cause trouble, hatred, etc. In fact, the general teaching of Proverbs is that riches, at least to a moderate extent, are a blessing, the gift of God, and a token of his favor. But sometimes they are wrongly acquired and evils may be associated with them. They are not, therefore, the greatest blessing; the ethical and religious condition is more important. **17. Stalled**, render, *fatted*. **18a** is nearly identical with 29 : 22a (see also 29 : 22b), and is similar to 28 : 25a. **Wrathful**, better, *passionate*. It means not one who is angry, but one who is easily angered, who often

becomes angry, the exact opposite of **slow to anger** in **b. 19a**, the meaning is that the way is continually beset with difficulties, so that he is unable to advance. Here the difficulties are real, caused by his laziness; in 22 : 13 they are imaginary. **B**. The exact antithesis to **sluggard** would be *diligent*. An antithesis is obtained, however, by the natural inference from **b** that the upright man is diligent. **20a** is identical with 10 : 1a; **b** is similar to 10 : 1b. **21**. Here, as elsewhere, **folly** is an ethical as well as an intellectual term, as is suggested by **maketh straight** in **b. 22**. Similar to 11 : 14; **b** is similar to 20 : 18a; 24 : 6b. **Purposes are disappointed**, better, *plans are broken, i. e.*, fail. **Are established, i. e.**, succeed. **23a**, see 24 : 26; **b**, see 25 : 11. **In the answer**, better, *through the answer*. Some think that answer here means in general utterance, as probably in 16 : 1. But it is better to keep the common meaning here, as that is equally appropriate in the connection, and think of a fitting answer to what another has said. The joy might naturally come both from his own recognition of the fitness of the answer and from a similar recognition on the part of others. **24a**, render, *The way of life which is upward (belongs) to the wise*. "Life," in the phrase "way of life," in Proverbs, regularly refers to the present life, so that the presumption is that it does so here. It is also to be observed that the phrase is in contrast with **Sheol** in **b**, which would indi-

25 The Lord will destroy the house of the proud : but he will establish the border of the widow.

26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord : but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house : but he that hateth gifts shall live.

28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer : but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

29 The Lord is far from the wicked : but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart : and a good report maketh the bones fat.

31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul : but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

33 The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom ; and before honour is humility.

25 The Lord will root up the house of the proud ; But he will establish the border of the widow.

26 Evil devices are an abomination to the Lord :

But pleasant words are pure.

27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house ;

But he that hateth gifts shall live.

28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer : But the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

29 The Lord is far from the wicked :

But he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart :

And good tidings make the bones fat.

31 The ear that hearkeneth to the reproof of life shall abide among the wise.

32 He that refuseth correction despiseth his own soul :

But he that hearkeneth to reproof getteth understanding.

33 The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom ; And before honour goeth humility.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1 THE preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.

2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes : but the Lord weigheth the spirits.

3 Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

1 THE preparations of the heart belong to man :

But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.

2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes :

But the Lord weigheth the spirits.

3 Commit thy works unto the Lord,

And thy thoughts shall be established.

cate a reference to this life. It is therefore best to accept that meaning, since it is entirely suitable in this connection. **Upward** is used as a description of the present life in contrast with **beneath** in **b**, which is used as a description of "Sheol." **25a** is similar to 16 : 5a. **Establish the border.** (See 22 : 28 ; 23 : 10 ; Deut. 19 : 14 ; 27 : 17.) This means confirm the owner in possession of the land in contrast with the removal of the boundary, which was equivalent to its being seized by some one else. **26.** As it stands, **b** gives little meaning either by itself or in connection with **a**. It seems best to change the text slightly, nearly with Chajes, reading

וְטַהֲרֵם אֲכָרִים וְטַהֲרֵם אֲכָרִים-נְעִים, *at'hôrê 'amârim u'ām, for* וְטַהֲרֵם אֲכָרִים-נְעִים, *at'hôrîm 'imrê nōām, and* render, *But the pure in words are acceptable* (to him), which affords a good meaning and is in harmony with the parallelism. **27. Gain.** render, *unjust gain.* **Troubleth** means *brings disaster upon.* For the thought, see note on 11 : 29. **Gifts** (*bribes*), the rendering of A. R. V. is the better. These are such as are offered to a judge. By itself the thought of **a** might be more general, referring to any unjust acquisition, but in connection with **b** it probably refers especially to oppression by an unjust judge. **28. Heart,** render, *mind.* The chief thought of ver. 28 is that the righteous speaks after due consideration, the wicked inconsiderately. It is also implied in **a** that the words are good and stated in **b** that they are evil. **29b.** (See ver. 8 ; Ps. 1 : 6.) **30. Heart** may be his own or another's ; the parallelism indicates the latter.

**The light of the eyes,** then, means a friendly, favorable look of the eyes. See similar phrases in 16 : 15 and Ps. 4 : 6. **31. Ear,** synecdoche, meaning *man*, as often. **Reproof of life,** reproof leading to life. **32.** (See 8 : 36 : 13 : 18 ; 19 : 8.) **Despiseth his own soul,** better, *despises himself, i. e.,* regards himself, in particular his general welfare, as of little value. Another possible rendering is, *despises his life*, but it is not so good because there is nothing in this connection to point specifically to the thought of death. **33a** is similar to 1 : 7 ; 9 : 10 ; **b** is identical with 18 : 12b, where it is in exact antithetic parallelism. **Instruction of wisdom** means instruction leading to wisdom. The relation of subject and predicate in **a** is not very exact ; the meaning is, the fear of Jehovah gives instruction leading to wisdom.

**Chap. 16. 1. The preparations of the heart,** render, *The deliberations of the mind.* **Answer** is probably used in a broad sense, equivalent to *utterance.* The verse apparently can only mean, man can think and deliberate, but Divine help is needed to speak words that are fitting. The thought is somewhat like that of Matt. 10 : 19. It cannot be generalized, as Toy would do, so as to be equivalent to "Man proposes, God disposes" ; see note on ver. 9. It is a similar thought, but in a specific application referring only to speech. **2.** The verse is nearly identical with 21 : 2 and similar to 3 : 7 ; 14 : 12 ; 24 : 12. **3. Works,** in the sense of *undertakings.* **Thoughts** (*pur-*

4 The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

8 Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.

9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

10 A divine sentence is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.

11 A just weight and balance are the Lord's; all the weights of the bag are his work.

12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness; for the throne is established by righteousness.

13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.

14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it.

15 In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

4 The Lord hath made every thing for its own end:

Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord:

Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged:

And by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

7 When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

8 Better is a little with righteousness

Than great revenues with injustice.

9 A man's heart deviseth his way:

But the Lord directeth his steps.

10 A divine sentence is in the lips of the king:

His mouth shall not transgress in judgement.

11 A just balance and scales are the Lord's:

All the weights of the bag are his work.

12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness:

For the throne is established by righteousness.

13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings;

And they love him that speaketh right.

14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death:

But a wise man will pacify it.

15 In the light of the king's countenance is life:

And his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

poses). The rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **Shall be established** means *shall succeed*. **4. The Lord (Jehovah) hath made everything**, render, *Every work of Jehovah is*, following G., S., and T., without change of consonantal text, reading  $\text{וְיַעַל}$ , *pā'āl*, for  $\text{וְיַעַל}$ , *pā'āl*. The thought is similar, but this rendering is more in harmony with the usual tone of Proverbs, being more practical and less speculative. **The day of evil**, render, *a day of calamity*. The thought of the verse is that every created object has its own determined purpose, which is true even of the wicked, who are destined to be overtaken by disaster and destruction. **5a** is similar to 15: 25a; **b** is nearly identical with 11: 21a. **Though hand join in hand**, render, *Assuredly*, as in 11: 21. **6. Purged (atoned for)**. The rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. The teaching of **a** apparently contradicts other biblical statements, even those of the Old Testament. But only apparently, for this is not to be regarded as a complete statement. In some respects, especially in relation to one's fellow-men, which is indicated by the words **mercy and truth**, this would be true. **B** is similar to 3: 7b; 14: 16a. **8**. The verse is similar to 15: 16 f. **9. A man's heart deviseth**, better, *A man's mind plans*. This verse, rather than ver. 1, is the equivalent of the modern proverb, "Man proposes, God disposes." **10**. Some passages about kings are simply founded on experience, as ver. 14, 15. Others present the ideal of the king. Necessarily, however, the latter would not be written under a bad

king, who would be a conspicuous contrast with the ideal, and would be entirely out of harmony with the time of a foreign king. This verse presents the ideal of the theocratic king as God's representative. There is no reason for weakening the statement by saying, what is in no way indicated, that the verse, especially **a**, simply presents the popular idea of the king. **11**. See note on 11: 1. The two clauses express substantially the same thought in different language. **12b** is very similar to 25: 5b. **14**. Some think that **b** means a man who is wise will show his wisdom by *endeavoring* to pacify it. But this is not the natural interpretation. It is better to regard **a** as indicating the danger to people in general from the wrath of the king and **b** as indicating the safety of the wise, because by their wisdom they are able to pacify the wrath. This should perhaps be indicated by rendering, *can pacify it*. **B** shows the power of wisdom. **15. Light of the countenance**, friendly look. (See 15: 30.) **The latter rain**. The Old Testament often speaks distinctively of the early rain and the latter rain. The fact is that the whole winter was the rainy season, beginning the last of October and closing about the middle of April. During this time the rain was to a large extent continuous. It is not true, as many have supposed, that there were two periods of rain, with an interval between them. But the beginning and end were of chief importance for practical purposes. Abundance of rain at the beginning was necessary in order to soften the ground for successful plowing and at the end in order to

16 How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

18 Pride *goeth* before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

19 Better *it is to be of* an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good; and whose trusteth in the Lord, happy *is* he.

21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent; and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.

22 Understanding *is* a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools *is* folly.

23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words *are as* a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

25 There *is* a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

26 He that laboureth, laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him.

27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips *there is* as a burning fire.

28 A froward man soweth strife; and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way *that is* not good.

16 How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold! Yea, to get understanding is rather to be chosen than silver.

17 The high way of the upright *is* to depart from evil:

He that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

18 Pride *goeth* before destruction,

And an haughty spirit before a fall.

19 Better *it is to be of* a lowly spirit with the poor,

Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

20 He that giveth heed unto the word shall find good:

And whose trusteth in the Lord, happy *is* he.

21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent;

And the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.

22 Understanding *is* a wellspring of life unto him that hath it:

But the correction of fools *is* their folly.

23 The heart of the wise instructeth his mouth,

And addeth learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words *are as* an honeycomb,

Sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

25 There *is* a way which seemeth right unto a man,

But the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

26 The appetite of the labouring man laboureth for him;

For his mouth craveth it of him.

27 A worthless man deviseth mischief;

And in his lips there *is* as a scorching fire.

28 A froward man scattereth abroad strife;

And a whisperer separateth chief friends.

29 A man of violence enticeth his neighbour,

And leadeth him in a way *that is* not good.

help the growing crop and insure a bountiful harvest. The harvest began about the end of the rain, the middle of April. Abundance of rain in the middle of the rainy season was expected as certain, but it was not so certain at the beginning and end. Thus the anxiety about the early and late rain arose both from their importance and their relative uncertainty. On account of this anxiety they were designated by name and often especially mentioned. **16.** See note on 3: 14. **17.** The verse is similar to 13: 3; 15: 10. **Is to depart from evil**, render, *avoids calamity*. Either rendering is possible, but the one given is favored by the parallelism. **B.** Nearly the same phraseology is found in 19: 16a, the contrasted thought in 19: 16b. **Soul**, render, *life*. This rendering is plainly indicated by the parallelism in 19: 16a, and also less distinctly in 13: 3, where the same phrase occurs. **18.** Similarity of thought with this verse is found in many passages in Proverbs and elsewhere; see especially 18: 12. **19.** The antithesis is exact. **Lowly spirit** is contrasted with **prond**, and **poor** with **divide the spoil**. **20.** **Word** is the word of God, as suggested by the parallelism. (See 13: 18.) **Good** here means prosperity. **Happy is he**. (See 14: 21.) **21.** In the usual translation, **a** really says nothing that is not obvious. It is better to render, with Chajes, without change of the consonantal text, reading אִיִּקָּרֵא, *yīqārā*, for אִיִּקָּרֵב, *yīqqārē*, *An intelligent man calls to the wise in mind, i. e., summons him to give instruction to him, which*

affords an appropriate thought. **B.** Ver. 21b and 23b are so similar that they are probably connected in origin. If so, the presumption is that the word rendered **learning** has the same syntactical relation in both. In ver. 23b it can hardly be subject, therefore it is to be regarded as object in both. In both verses render, instead of learning, *persuasiveness*; see 7: 21 where the meaning of the Hebrew word is similar. In ver. 21b the thought is that gracefulness of expression improves the persuasive power of wise speech. (See 22: 11b.) **23. Heart**, render, *mind*. The thought of **a** is similar to that of 15: 2a. On **b** see note on ver. 21b. **24a** is similar to Ps. 19: 10. **B.** (See 15: 4, 30b.) **Health**, render, *healing*. **25.** The verse is identical with 14: 12; see note there. **26b. Craveth it of him** (*urgeth him thereto*). The rendering of A. R. V. is the better. The verse gives an illustration of the prominence of human appetite as a compelling motive in human industry. **27.** Both clauses have reference to the effect of his life on his fellow-men. **28.** See note on 6: 14c. The thought of the verse is similar to that of 26: 20. **Froward** (*perverse*). The rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **Separateth chief friends** is a possible rendering of אֶלְנֵי אֱלֹהִים, *mōphridh 'allāph*, but the natural interpretation is that indicated by the rendering, *alienates* (his own) *intimate friend*. The same phrase is found in 17: 9b. **29.** This verse expresses not what the man of violence always accomplishes, but what he

30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things; moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.

31 The hoary head *is* a crown of glory, *if* it be found in the way of righteousness.

32 *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*

33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the Lord.

30 He that shutteth his eyes, *it is* to devise froward things:

He that compresseth his lips bringeth evil to pass.

31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, It shall be found in the way of righteousness.

32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;

And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

33 The lot is cast into the lap; But the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1 BETTER *is* a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices *with* strife.

2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

3 The fining pot *is* for silver, and the furnace for gold; but the Lord trieth the hearts.

4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker; and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

6 Children's children *are* the crown of old men; and the glory of children *are* their fathers.

7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool; much less do lying lips a prince.

8 A gift *is* as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.

1 BETTER is a dry morsel and quietness therewith,

Than an house full of feasting with strife.

2 A servant that dealeth wisely shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, And shall have part in the inheritance among the brethren.

3 The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; But the Lord trieth the hearts.

4 An evil-doer giveth heed to wicked lips; And a liar giveth ear to a mischievous tongue.

5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker; And he that is glad at calamity shall not be unpunished.

6 Children's children are the crown of old men; And the glory of children are their fathers.

7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool; Much less do lying lips a prince.

8 A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; Whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.

seeks to do, viz, to make his own neighbor an accomplice with himself. (See 1 : 10.) 30.

**Froward things** (*perverse things*). The rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **B. Bringeth evil to pass**, naturally to be rendered as past, *has* (already) *brought evil to pass*.

The use of tenses indicates that a refers to a contraction of the eyes by one who is planning wickedness, and b to a compression of the lips, perhaps in scorn, by one who has accomplished, partly or wholly, the designed evil. 31. **A crown of glory**, better, *an honorable crown*.

**B. It shall be**, better, *it is, i. e.*, it is attained by a life of righteousness, the thought being the common one in Proverbs, and in the Old Testament generally, that only the righteous reach old age with the consequent gray hair. 32. (See 25 : 28.)

33. The verse is similar in thought to ver. 9. The practice of casting lots was common in all antiquity, and is often mentioned in the Old Testament with the teaching that God directs the throw, at least under certain circumstances. *Lot* is mentioned again in 18 : 18.

**Disposing thereof**, better, *decision of it, i. e.*, the decision which it produces.

**Chap. 17. 1.** The verse is similar to 15 : 16, 17. **Feasting with strife**. The literal rendering is better, *sacrifices of strife*. It means sacrificial feasts accompanied with strife. The reason why

sacrificial feasts were especially singled out for mention is probably that they were especially sumptuous repasts, since meat was not common as an ordinary article of diet. See 7 : 14, and note there. 2. **Shall have rule . . . shall have part**, instead of "shall" render as potential, *may*. This seems better because such reversals of fortune could never have been common, so that it seems unlikely that they would be presented as constituting the general rule. The thought is that an unworthy son may be disinherited, and a worthy slave take his place, sharing the inheritance with the other sons.

**A. Causeth shame**, render, *does shamefully*. 3a is identical with 27 : 21a; b is similar to 15 : 11; 24 : 12. **Trieth**, better, *tests*. The meaning of b is that it is Jehovah alone who is able to test the hearts. 4. The thought is that one who gives heed to wicked conversation thereby shows himself to be wicked. 5a is very nearly identical with 14 : 31a. **Calamity**. The parallelism suggests that it is the sudden occurrence of poverty. 6. The verse is similar in thought to Ps. 127 and 128. **A** expresses the common view, **b** emphasizes the other side, the value of parents to their children. 7. **Prince**, better, *man of nobility*. The reference in both clauses is to the incongruity with the character of the two respectively. 8. **Gift** (*bribe*). The rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **Of him**

rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **Of him**

rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **Of him**

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rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **Of him**

rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **Of him**

9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love : but he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.

10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool.

11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion ; therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.

13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water ; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with.

15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.

16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it ?

17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, and cometh surety in the presence of his friend.

9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love : But he that harpeth on a matter separateth chief friends.

10 A rebuke entereth deeper into one that hath understanding than a hundred stripes into a fool.

11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion ; Therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, Rather than a fool in his folly.

13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, Evil shall not depart from his house.

14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water :

Therefore leave off contention, before there be quarrelling.

15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous,

Both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord.

16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom,

Seeing he hath no understanding ?

17 A friend loveth at all times,

And a brother is born for adversity.

18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, And cometh surety in the presence of his neighbour.

that hath it, is literally, of its possessor. This may designate the giver or the receiver. If understood of the former, the rendering of **b** will be, *Whithersoever he turns he will prosper*. In that case the thought of **a** is, a bribe is regarded by the one who uses it as something of real and undeniable value. **B** then continues to express his own estimation of the case, not fully the reality. His idea is that wherever he turns he will prosper ; a bribe is equally efficient in any direction. This is a more consistent interpretation than can be obtained by understanding possessor in the other way. An opinion of the moral quality of bribery is found in ver. 23, here the statement is simply the result of observation. **9a** is similar to 10 : 12b. **Harpeth on**, render, *repeats*, *i. e.*, tells publicly. **Separateth chief friends**, render, *alienates* (his own) intimate friend, as in 16 : 28, where the Hebrew phrase is the same. **10**. The reading of MT. gives a form difficult to explain. It is probably best to follow partly the reading of Fr., after G., without change of the consonantal text, reading תַּהֲעֵת, *tāhēth* (from תַּהֲעֵת, *hāthāth*), for תַּחֲעֵת, *tāhāth*, and render, *A rebuker agitates one that has understanding, more than a hundred stripes a fool*. **11a**. Render, *A rebellious man seeks only disaster*. "Seeks," not consciously, but he seeks that which inevitably results in disaster, the same use of the word as in ver. 19b. **Calleth** is used in the same way in 18 : 6. **Therefore**, better, *and*. Since it is rebellion that is in mind, the messenger is one sent from the king to punish him. **12**. A bear robbed of her whelps is very dangerous. (See Hos. 13 : 8.) But here the thought is that the fool is really more

dangerous. **13. Rewardeth**, better, *returns*. **B. Evil**, better, *disaster*. It is the same Hebrew word as in **a**, רָעָא, *rā'ā*, a play upon the two common meanings of the word. **14**. See note on 6 : 14c. The thought of **a** is not expressed very definitely, but apparently it has reference to the ease of letting out water that is dammed up, and the difficulty of damming it again. Strife begun will continue, as the water continues to run. The meaning of **b** is plain, but the translation somewhat uncertain ; perhaps best, *therefore cease before contention breaks forth, i. e.*, check the first beginnings of contention. **15**. (See 24 : 24.) **Justifieth . . . condemneth**, both used in a legal sense. The statement would apply especially to unjust judges. **16**. The thought is, wisdom cannot be bought, money is of no consequence in connection with it ; mental and religious preparation is necessary for its acquisition. **17. A friend**, literally, *the friend*, *i. e.*, one who is a friend in a special sense, meaning a true friend. Some have regarded the parallelism as antithetic, but there is no indication of contrast, so that it is better to regard it as synonymous. The thought is, a true friend is such at all times, including the time of need, and a brother is especially helpful in adversity. Friend and brother are classed together as similar, brother indicating one who is really worthy of the name. In 18 : 24b and 27 : 10 a different thought is found, brother designating merely physical relationship, in contrast with friend. **18**. Similar warnings are found in 6 : 1-5 ; 11 : 15 ; 20 : 16 ; 22 : 26 ; 27 : 13. **Striketh hands**, in token of becoming surety for another. Here all suretyship is condemned. (See note on 6 : 1-5.)

19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.  
 20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good; and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.  
 21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow; and the father of a fool hath no joy.  
 22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.  
 23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.  
 24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.  
 25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.  
 26 Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.  
 27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.  
 28 Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: He that raiseth high his gate seeketh destruction.  
 20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: And he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.  
 21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: And the father of a fool hath no joy.  
 22 A merry heart is a good medicine: But a broken spirit drieth up the bones.  
 23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom, To pervert the ways of judgement.  
 24 Wisdom is before the face of him that hath understanding: But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.  
 25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, And bitterness to her that bare him.  
 26 Also to smite the righteous is not good, Nor to smite the noble for their uprightness.  
 27 He that spareth his words hath knowledge: And he that is of a cool spirit is a man of understanding.  
 28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: When he shutteth his lips, he is esteemed as prudent.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1 THROUGH desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.  
 2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.  
 3 When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.

1 HE that separateth himself seeketh his own desire. And rageth against all sound wisdom.  
 2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, But only that his heart may reveal itself.  
 3 When the wicked cometh, there cometh also contempt, And with ignominy cometh reproach.

19a is similar to 29 : 22; see also note on 6 : 14c. **B**, see 16 : 18. Render **a**, *He that loves strife loves punishment*, regarding the usual word for transgression, פְּשָׁעָא, *pēshā*, as here expressing its result, *punishment*, as in Dan. 9 : 24. The second "loves" and **seeketh** in **b** are used in the same way as "seeketh" in ver. 11. See note there. **He that raiseth high his gate**, as part of a lofty building, an indication of pride. **20a**. See 16 : 20; **b**, see 10 : 31. **Good** means prosperity, as in 16 : 20. **Mischief**, better, *calamity*. **21**. The verse is similar to ver. 25; 10 : 1. **22**. (See 3 : 8; 16 : 24.) The verse teaches in general the power of the mind over the body. **Drith up the bones**. In contrast with phrases like that of 3 : 8b, see note there. **23**. **Gift** (*bribe*). The rendering of A. R. V. is the better. **A wicked man** refers to a corrupt judge. The meaning of the verse is that a corrupt judge receives a bribe to render an unjust decision. **The bosom** is specified as a secret place where the bribe would be carried, used similarly in 21 : 14. To understand "a wicked man" as referring to the bribe giver, as some do, is less natural here. On **b**, see 18 : 5. **24a** probably means that wisdom is before him as a goal, *i. e.*, he keeps it always in mind as the object of his striving. In **b**, on the contrary, the thoughts of the fool are wandering, he has no one thing in mind, he is thinking of everything but wisdom. **25**. The verse is similar to

ver. 21; 10 : 1; 15 : 20; 19 : 13. **26**. Also, render, *even*. **Punish**. The usual meaning of פָּגַע, *'anāsh*, is *fine*, which is probably better here; this is the word modified by "even." **Smite** means punish by scourging. **Noble** is used in an ethical sense, as in ver. 7 (see note) and Isa. 32 : 5, 8. The most probable interpretation of the verse is that which is indicated by the paraphrastic rendering: Even to "fine" the righteous is not good, how much less to "smite" the noble on account of their uprightness. **B** is thus intended to be stronger than **a**. **27**. See the same and contrasted thought in 10 : 19 and 13 : 3. **He that is of a cool spirit** means one who is calm, unruffled. **28**. In Proverbs a reticent man is the type of a wise man. See such passages as 12 : 23. So a fool can pass for wise as long as he keeps silent, both because he is assuming the usual demeanor of a wise man, and because he is not betraying his folly by his speech.

**Chap. 18. 1. Separateth himself**. There is nothing here to point definitely to one who separates himself from the congregation of Israel, as many have thought. It is better, therefore, to regard the words as more general, referring to one who breaks with his friends, through jealousy, hatred, misunderstandings, etc. Such a one is characterized as selfish and unreasonable. **2. Heart**, render, *mind*. **May reveal itself** refers, of course, to making folly manifest. **3.**



4 The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

5 It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

6 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

8 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit.

12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.

13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

16 A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

17 He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.

19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

20 A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit

4 The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters; The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook.

5 To accept the person of the wicked is not good, Nor to turn aside the righteous in judgement.

6 A fool's lips enter into contention, And his mouth calleth for stripes.

7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul.

8 The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

9 He also that is slack in his work Is brother to him that is a destroyer.

10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower: The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city, And as an high wall in his own imagination.

12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, And before honour goeth humility.

13 He that giveth answer before he heareth, It is folly and shame unto him.

14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; But a broken spirit who can bear?

15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; And the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

16 A man's gift maketh room for him, And bringeth him before great men.

17 He that pleadeth his cause first seemeth just; But his neighbour cometh and searcheth him out.

18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, And parteth between the mighty.

19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; And such contentions are like the bars of a castle.

20 A man's belly shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth;

It is more natural to regard this verse, like 11 : 2 and other proverbs, as indicating, in **contentment** and **reproach**, not the feeling of the wicked toward others, but their feeling toward him. **Ignominy**, in this connection, apparently must mean shameful actions. **4a** gives a thought similar to that of 20 : 5a, the unsearchableness of a man's words. **Wellspring**, better, *fountain*. Here the comparison naturally suggests the inexhaustibleness of the supply of wisdom which flows from a wise man. The objection to this interpretation of **b** is the incongruity of the figurative expressions. But such incongruities are not uncommon in Proverbs; see, e. g., 11 : 30. **5a** is similar in thought to 24 : 23b; 28 : 21a. **6. Enter into**, better, *come with*, i. e., bring. **Calleth**, used in the same way as *seeketh*, 17 : 11; see note there. **7.** On the verse see 10 : 19a; 12 : 13a; on **a**, 13 : 3b; on **b**, 13 : 14b; 14 : 27b. **Soul**, some render here, *self*, but the best rendering is *life*. This is favored by the parallelism, and also especially by the use of the word in connection with the word snare, which suggests captivity and death. **8.** Identical with 26 : 22. The verse states the avidity with which people in general listen to the words of a slanderer. **A whisperer** is a slanderer. (See 16 : 28.) For the comparison with food, see 19 : 28b; Job 20 : 12-16; 34 : 7. **9b** is nearly identical with 28 : 24b. **Is brother**. This is a strong way of saying, is similar, pro-

duces the same results. **11a** is identical with 10 : 15a; the application of the thought is different in the two passages. **12a** is similar to 16 : 18a; **b** is identical with 15 : 33b. **13.** (See Eccles. 11 : 8.) **14. Spirit** is here used as the seat of courage. **Will sustain**, better, *sustains*. **Infirmity**, better, *misfortune*, literally *sickness*. **Bear**, the meaning is not *endure*, but *sustain*, who can support that which should be itself the support. **15a** is very similar to 15 : 14a. **The heart of the prudent**, render, *an intelligent mind*. The thought of the verse is similar to that of 19 : 6b. There is no occasion here to think exclusively or chiefly of bribes, the verse is more general in statement. It tells of the power of complimentary gifts, which are so common and so potent in the East. **Great men**, the same phrase is used in a similar connection in 25 : 6b. **17.** This is in effect an admonition to a judge to hear carefully both sides of a case. **Neighbor**, the other party to the lawsuit. **18b** means, it separates them from each other, prevents further discord, being thus similar to **a**. **19.** Something like that supplied in R. V. is implied in **a**; such an ellipsis is not uncommon. **Such**, the connection with the preceding clause justifies the addition. Both clauses mean, the nearer friends are the more bitter enemies they make. There is no sufficient reason for emending the text as some have done. **20a** is nearly identical with 12 : 14a. (See also

of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

22 Who so findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.

23 The poor useth entreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

24 A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

With the increase of his lips shall he be satisfied.  
21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue; And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.  
22 Who so findeth a wife findeth a good thing, And obtaineth favour of the Lord.  
23 The poor useth entreaties; But the rich answereth roughly.  
24 He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruction; But there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1 BETTER is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

2 Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.

3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord.

4 Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.

5 A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.

6 Many will entreat the favour of the prince; and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.

1 BETTER is the poor that walketh in his integrity Than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool.

2 Also, that the soul be without knowledge is not good;

And he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.

3 The foolishness of man subverteth his way;

And his heart fretteth against the Lord.

4 Wealth addeth many friends;

But the poor is separated from his friend.

5 A false witness shall not be unpunished;

And he that uttereth lies shall not escape.

6 Many will intreat the favour of the liberal man; And every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.

13 : 2a.) 21. The verse is similar to 15 : 4; 26 :

19 : 14b; a is similar to 12 : 4; 31 : 10; and in phraseology to 8 : 35; b, see 12 : 2a. **Wife**, goodness is necessarily implied. **A good thing**, better, *good fortune*. **B** means that the obtaining of a good wife is a token of God's favor.

24. **Doeth it to his own destruction**, more literal and better, *is about to be destroyed*. Friends in general are an injury and not a benefit. **B** teaches that often a true friend is more to be depended on than a brother. The thought of 27 : 10 is the same; see also note on 17 : 17. The verse teaches that quality not quantity is to be sought in making friends.

**Chap. 19.** 1. 28 : 6 is identical in the Hebrew with this verse, except that *rich* is found in place of *fool*. In order to obtain a passable meaning here it has usually been supposed that "fool" carries with it the implied idea of rich. Many have gone further and corrected the text here to "rich" on the basis of the other passage. That does not seem a sufficient warrant for making the change, however, if anything simpler will answer the purpose, when it is recalled how many of the proverbs are found in two forms varying slightly from each other. It is better, therefore, to make a simpler change, nearly following Chajes, omitting one consonant which could easily be a dittogram, and changing the vowels of one word, by which a suitable meaning is obtained, reading שְׂפָרְיָי, *m'äqqēsh*, for שְׂפָרְיָי, *m'ē'iqqēsh*, and omitting י, *wē*, in כְּרִי, *whā*. The rendering will then be, A

poor man who walks in his integrity is good (i. e., praiseworthy); one (i. e., a poor man) who perverts his ways is a fool. For the phraseology, see 10 : 9. It might seem that there is no need of the special mention of the "poor" in this connection, the language is really appropriate to any one. But it is, after all, especially appropriate when we remember the ideas and the teachings of those times. In general, riches were regarded as a reward for goodness; a poor man who retains his integrity in spite of the lack of this evidence of God's favor was therefore worthy of special praise. On the other hand, a poor man might become discouraged and give himself up to wickedness; on this man the opposite judgment should be passed. The verse is in reality a warning against regarding wealth as an infallible indication of God's favor. This is not a prominent teaching of Proverbs, but there are suggestions of it in several other passages. 2a. Of the various renderings offered the only one that really gives a good meaning is the following: *Even desire without knowledge is not good*. "Even" is to be regarded as modifying "desire," and *desire* as used in a good sense, meaning *zeal*. The thought is, even a good thing like zeal is not good without knowledge. **B. Sin-neth**, render, *misses*, i. e., his way, he fails in attaining his object by undue haste: this is similar to 21 : 5; 28 : 20. **3.** The thought is, men blame God for the results of their own foolishness. **4.** The verse is very similar to 14 : 20; on a see ver. 6, 7; 10 : 15. **5a** is identical with ver. 9a; **b** is very similar to ver. 9b. **6b** is similar to 18 : 16. This verse shows the advan-

7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him ; how much more do his friends go far from him ? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.

8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul : he that keepeth understanding shall find good.

9 A false witness shall not be unpunished ; and he that speaketh lies shall perish.

10 Delight is not seemly for a fool ; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.

11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger ; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

12 The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion : but his favour is as dew upon the grass.

13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father ; and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers ; and a prudent wife is from the Lord.

15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep ; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul ; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

19 A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment : for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.

20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

21 There are many devices in a man's heart ; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him : How much more do his friends go far from him ! He pursueth them with words, but they are gone.

8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul : He that keepeth understanding shall find good.

9 A false witness shall not be unpunished ; And he that uttereth lies shall perish.

10 Delicate living is not seemly for a fool ; Much less for a servant to have rule over princes.

11 The discretion of a man maketh him slow to anger ; And it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

12 The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion ; But his favour is as dew upon the grass.

13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father : And the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

14 House and riches are an inheritance from fathers : But a prudent wife is from the Lord.

15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep ; And the idle soul shall suffer hunger.

16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his soul : But he that is careless of his ways shall die.

17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, And his good deed will he pay him again.

18 Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope ; And set not thy heart on his destruction.

19 A man of great wrath shall bear the penalty : For if thou deliver him, thou must do it yet again.

20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, That thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

21 There are many devices in a man's heart ; But the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

tages of liberality, with no necessary implication of a corrupt use of gifts. 7c. The only allowable translation is, *he pursues words, they are not*. This does not give much meaning in itself, and has no connection with the preceding or following context. It is probable that this is a fragment of a couplet, the remainder of which, probably preceding, has been lost and cannot be restored. This is favored by the fact that, aside from this verse, there is no three-line proverb in this whole collection, 10 : 1 to 22 : 16, all are two-lined. 8. **His own soul**, better, *himself*. In ver. 16 the parallelism indicates that the same Hebrew word is to be rendered, *his life*. Here there is nothing in the parallelism or elsewhere to narrow the thought specifically to life. *Loveth himself* means, loves his own best and highest interests ; see the contrasted expression in 29 : 24a. 9. See note on ver. 5. 10. The thought in both clauses is of incongruity in the very nature of the case. 11. **To pass over a transgression** is to forgive it ; see Micah 7 : 18, where the Hebrew phrase is the same. 12a is nearly identical with 20 : 2a. 13b is similar to 27 : 15. **Dropping** is through a leaky roof. 14b is similar to 18 : 22. This speaks of a special indication of God's favor coming more directly from him than wealth. 16. **Commandment**, this is naturally of God ; see 13 : 13. **Keepeth his soul**,

render, *preserves his life*, a meaning indicated by the parallelism. The same Hebrew phrase occurs in 13 : 3 ; 16 : 17b. 17a is similar in thought to 14 : 31b, but stronger ; b, similar in thought to 12 : 14. **Good** is not expressed in the Hebrew, but implied in the connection. 18. **Seeing**, render, *when, i. e.*, while he is yet young and not hardened in evil. **On his destruction**, more literal and better, *on causing him to die*. **B** is often understood as being a restriction on a, a warning against severity so great that one would kill a son while chastising him. But surely such a warning would be unnecessary. More natural is the connection of thought as follows ; a life of sin results in premature death ; a son unpunished is sure to live a life of sin, therefore, do not refrain from punishing him, and so be responsible for his death ; 23 : 13 is similar. (See also 29 : 15.) 19. **The penalty**, better, *punishment*. The word פְּנִיָּה, 'ōnīsh, originally meant *fine*, but may also be used in general for "punishment," which meaning seems more suitable here. The thought is not that anger is in itself punishable, but it will surely lead to acts that are. The natural interpretation of b is indicated by the translation of R. V., it is of no use to save him once from the consequences of his offense, he will surely repeat it. 20. **In thy latter end**. (See Job 8 : 7.) Here the probable meaning is simply *in the future*. 21. The

22 The desire of a man *is* his kindness: and a poor man *is* better than a liar.

23 The fear of the Lord *tendeth* to life: and *he* that *hath* it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

24 A slothful man hideth his hand in *his* bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

25 Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware; and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

26 He that wasteth *his* father, and chaseth away *his* mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

22 The desire of a man *is* the measure of his kindness:

And a poor man is better than a liar.

23 The fear of the Lord *tendeth* to life: And *he* that *hath* it shall abide satisfied; He shall not be visited with evil.

24 The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish, And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

25 Smite a scorner, and the simple will learn prudence:

And reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

26 He that spoileth his father, and chaseth away his mother, Is a son that causeth shame and bringeth reproach.

27 Cease, my son, to hear instruction Only to err from the words of knowledge.

verse is similar to 16 : 9, 33; 20 : 24. **22a** is difficult, and the meaning is much disputed. A suitable meaning, and one that seems to be the best, is given by rendering, *a desire of a man is kindness to him*, or more freely, an object of desire by men in general is to have kindness shown to them. This rendering regards *his kindness*, which is literal, as meaning kindness shown to him. **B.** G. renders, *an honest poor man is better than a rich liar*, supplying two adjectives. There is no need of adding them, however, especially as it is probable that they simply indicate that the reading of the Septuagint is a paraphrase. But they are naturally implied in harmony with the general thought of Proverbs. No close connection in thought between **a** and **b** is apparent. **23.** This verse in English has three lines, but not in the Hebrew, **b** and **c** making one. **A.** A similar thought is found in 14 : 27a; 10 : 27a; the contrasted thought in 10 : 27b. **Tendeth**, better, *leads*, although it is merely supplied. **Life** means long life. **B.** The subject, as indicated by the words supplied in R. V., is the one who fears Jehovah, implied in **a**, as in the similar case of 14 : 26. **Satisfied**, render, *full* (of years), as in Gen. 25 : 8, where the Hebrew word is the same,  $\text{שָׂבַח}$ , *sābhē(ā')*. **Evil**, render, *disaster*, meaning premature death. The meaning here given to the latter part of the verse is not the one usually given which renders "satisfied," and gives it its ordinary meaning. Against the usual interpretation, however, is the fact that it is not in harmony with the parallelism. It is also not in accordance with the usage of the word so rendered. That means primarily satiated with food. But various metaphorical meanings are much more common. The only case aside from this verse where it is used metaphorically without being defined by some additional word is in Gen. 25 : 8, where it is used as equivalent

to the fuller phrase found elsewhere. The meaning of that passage is therefore to be adopted here, inasmuch as it is appropriate. **B** then expresses the same thought as **a** in other language, the one who fears Jehovah shall live to a good old age, he shall not be visited by any disaster which will cut him off prematurely. **24a** is identical with 26 : 15a; **b**, similar to 26 : 15b. (See also 15 : 19a.) This is a strong expression for laziness. The allusion is to the ancient, and even now Oriental, custom of using the hands for eating. (See Matt. 26 : 23.) **25. Scorer** (*scoffer*), the rendering of A. R. V. is the better. The meaning is that the scoffer is incapable of profiting by punishment, but the inexperienced learns from it. The one started on the way to wisdom, however, does not need blows to teach him; reproof is sufficient. **26a. Spoileth** (*doeth violence to*), the rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. **B.** render, *is a son who acts shamefully and disgracefully*. This assumes that a son is given possession of the property before the death of his father, otherwise he would have no power to act as is here indicated. **27.** The meaning given by the rendering of the R. V. is, it is better not to hear, than to hear and not to obey. This is possible as a translation. It is contrary, however, to the general usage of *hear* in Proverbs, which implies obedience as well as hearing. It is also opposed to the usual tone of Proverbs, which nowhere else recognizes a class of those who hear and do not obey. It is therefore generally conceded that some change of text is necessary. The change of one consonant may be suggested, reading  $\text{לִישְׁגֹּחַ}$ , *w'shāggōthā*, for  $\text{לִישְׁעֹחַ}$ , *lishgōth*,<sup>1</sup> which gives the rendering for **b**, and *thou errest from the words of knowledge*. It is conditional in fact, but not in form, if thou ceasest—thou wilt err. The thought is the danger of losing progress once made in wisdom, if a person does not con-

<sup>1</sup> See "American Journal of Semitic Languages," Vol. XIX., p. 54.

28 An ungodly witness scorneth judgment; and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.

29 Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.

28 A worthless witness mocketh at judgement: And the mouth of the wicked swalloweth iniquity.

29 Judgements are prepared for scorners, And stripes for the back of fools.

## CHAPTER XX.

1 WINE is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

2 The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: *whoso* provoketh him to anger sinneth *against* his own soul.

3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; *therefore* shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water: but a man of understanding will draw it out.

6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

7 The just man walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.

8 A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

10 Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord.

11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

1 WINE is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise.

2 The terror of a king is as the roaring of a lion: He that provoketh him to anger sinneth *against* his own life.

3 It is an honour for a man to keep aloof from strife:

But every fool will be quarrelling.

4 The slothful will not plow by reason of the winter;

Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing.

5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; But a man of understanding will draw it out.

6 Most men will proclaim every one his own kindness:

But a faithful man who can find?

7 A just man that walketh in his integrity,

Blessed are his children after him.

8 A king that sitteth on the throne of judgment

Scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean,

I am pure from my sin?

10 Divers weights, and divers measures,

Both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord.

11 Even a child maketh himself known by his doings,

Whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

tinue to receive instruction. 28b, as well as a, probably refers chiefly, perhaps not entirely, to a witness. Swalloweth means eagerly receives; the thought of 18: 8 is similar. The form of expression in b, as often, is not quite what would be expected from a. The change of one letter by Fr., reading *yābbi(ā)*, for *yābbā*, *yābbāllā*, by which he obtains the meaning utters (see 15: 28), instead of "swalloweth," is plausible but unnecessary. 29b is similar to 10: 13b; 26: 3b.

Chap. 20. 1. Wine, made from grapes; strong drink, a general term, including drinks of an intoxicating nature made from various kinds of fruits as well as from grapes. Err-eth, better, reels, i. e., in drunkenness. 2a is similar to 19: 12a. Sinneth against, better, forfeits. 3b. (See note on 6: 14c.) 4. By reason of the winter, render, in autumn, the usual time of plowing. It is simply laziness, not cold, that prevents him. Render b, therefore he shall seek in harvest, and there is nothing. The rendering beg is improbable from the fact that in the joyful season of harvest any kind of beggar would not be apt to go empty-handed. The rendering given has also the advantage of presenting a thought which often appears in Proverbs, viz, a punishment which is the natural result of the act. The

implied object of "seek" is a crop. 5a is similar to 18: 4. 6a. Most men, better, many men. B does not mean that he is not to be found, but he is rare, as is indicated by the use of the same phrase in 31: 10. 7b. (See 14: 26b.) 8a. (See 16: 10, 12.) A king that sitteth . . . scattereth away, render, A king sits . . . and winnows. "Winnows," the rendering is the same as in ver. 26, where the same Hebrew word, *mā'ārē*, is employed in a similar connection. The meaning is that a king examines all things and separates the true from the false as the grain is separated from the chaff. It is of course implied that he is a good king. 9. This verse teaches the universal prevalence of sin, which is also taught in Gen. 6: 5; 1 Kings 8: 46; Eccl. 7: 20; Ps. 130: 3; 143: 2, etc. 10b is identical with 17: 15b. For a similar thought see 11: 1; 20: 23; Amos 8: 5; Deut. 25: 13-16; Ezek. 45: 10. 11. Child. The word so translated here, *nā'ār*, is found in Proverbs in the following passages aside from the present one: 1: 4; 7: 7; 22: 6, 15; 23: 13; 29: 15. In 1: 4 and 7: 7 it plainly means young man, a youth of considerable age. In none of the other passages is it used of a young child; he is always old enough to receive training. Here render young man. Even, better, also, i. e., a young man as well as older people. Render b, Whether he be pure and whether his conduct be right. This

12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them.

13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

14 *It is naught, it is naught*, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

15 There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

16 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

17 Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

18 Every purpose is established by counsel; and with good advice make war.

19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

21 An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.

22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.

23 Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord; and a false balance is not good.

24 Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?

25 *It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy*, and after vows to make inquiry.

12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye,

The Lord hath made even both of them.

13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty;

Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

14 It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer:

But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

15 There is gold, and abundance of rubies.

But the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

16 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger;

And hold him in pledge that is surety for strangers.

17 Bread of falsehood is sweet to a man;

But afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

18 Every purpose is established by counsel:

And by wise guidance make thou war.

19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets:

Therefore meddle not with him that openeth wide his lips.

20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother,

His lamp shall be put out in the blackest darkness.

21 An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning;

But the end thereof shall not be blessed.

22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil:

Wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.

23 Divers weights are an abomination to the Lord;

And a false balance is not good.

24 A man's goings are of the Lord;

How then can man understand his way?

25 It is a snare to a man rashly to say, *It is holy*,

And after vows to make inquiry.

is suggested by the similar phrase in 21 : 8 and by the fact that it gives a better meaning, since otherwise the clause is almost tautological.

13a is similar to 6 : 9-11. **B.** (See 12 : 11a.)

**Open thine eyes**, awake and go to work, antithesis with **a**. 14. **It is naught, it is naught** (*it is bad, it is bad*). The rendering of A. R. V. is the better. A common practice is mentioned, without comment, of depreciating what is to be bought and afterward boasting of the bargain.

15. For thought see 3 : 14, 15; 8 : 11. **There is**, *i. e.*, in one's possession.

**Rubies**, render, *corals*, and see note on 3 : 15.

**B**, the thought is that lips which speak knowledge are more precious than gold and corals.

16. The verse is nearly identical with 27 : 13. Some would correct this text by that, but it seems unnecessary, since variant forms of the same proverb are so common. Render: *Take his garment, because he has become surety for a stranger; and hold him in pledge for strangers*.

It is probable that the meaning "stranger" and not simply *another* is to be given here, inasmuch as two different words occur in the two clauses.

It is not necessary to regard strangers here as meaning more than those not of one's own family. It would then be an admonition against practically all suretyship. In **a** the garment pledged is to be taken and in **b** the man himself is to be kept in pledge.

17a. (See 9 : 17.)

**Bread of falsehood** means bread obtained by falsehood. **B.** (See Matt. 7 : 9; Lam. 3 : 16.)

18a, the contrasted thought is found in 15 : 22a. (See also 16 : 3b.) **B** is similar to 24 : 6a. Here war is not praised or encouraged, but it is recognized as a fact and advice is given concerning it.

19. For rendering and explanation, see note on 11 : 13.

20a. See 28 : 24; 30 : 11, 17, and the commands in Exod. 21 : 17; Lev. 20 : 9; Dent. 27 : 16.

**Or**, better, *and*. **B.** (See 13 : 9; 24 : 20; Job 18 : 5, 6.)

**In the blackest darkness**, render, *in the middle of darkness*, as in the similar phrase in 7 : 9. This means: at midnight, at the darkest time, when no other light is available, it is a thorough quenching.

In accordance with the general meaning of such metaphorical language, see note on 13 : 9, the meaning is utter adversity.

This indicates not necessarily destruction, but most complete disaster.

21a is similar to 28 : 20b, 22a.

**An inheritance**, render, *property*. It is implied in **a** that the haste to become rich leads to wrong methods.

22a is similar in thought to 24 : 29; see also 24 : 17 and the stronger statement in 25 : 21.

23. The verse is similar to ver. 10; 11 : 1.

24a is nearly identical with Ps. 37 : 23a, with the omission of one word, but **b** is quite different in the two. So far as thought is concerned, either might be an allusion to the other. (See also 16 : 9; 19 : 21; Jer. 10 : 23.)

25. **To make inquiry**, better, *to hesitate*. The meaning of the verse is doubtful. Probably it is: a man acts wrongly who on the impulse of the moment consecrates a

26 A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.

27 The spirit of man *is* the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

28 Mercy and truth preserve the king; and his throne is upheld by mercy.

29 The glory of young men *is* their strength; and the beauty of old men *is* the gray head.

30 The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.

26 A wise king winnoweth the wicked, and bringeth the *threshing* wheel over them.

27 The spirit of man *is* the lamp of the Lord, Searching all the innermost parts of the belly.

28 Mercy and truth preserve the king: And his throne is upheld by mercy.

29 The glory of young men *is* their strength: And the beauty of old men *is* the hoary head.

30 Stripes that would cleanse away evil: And strokes *reach* the innermost parts of the belly.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1 THE king's heart *is* in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

2 Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

3 To do justice and judgment *is* more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, *is* sin.

5 The thoughts of the diligent *tend* only to plenteousness; but of every one *that is* hasty only to want.

6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue *is* a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

7 The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.

8 The way of man *is* inroad and strange: but as for the pure, his work *is* right.

9 *It is* better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

1 THE king's heart *is* in the hand of the Lord as the watercourses:

He turneth it whithersoever he will.

2 Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes: But the Lord weigheth the hearts.

3 To do justice and judgement *is* more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

4 An high look, and a proud heart,

Even the lamp of the wicked, *is* sin.

5 The thoughts of the diligent *tend* only to plenteousness:

But every one that *is* hasty *hasteth* only to want.

6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue *is* a vapour driven to and fro; they that *seek* them seek death.

7 The violence of the wicked shall sweep them away:

Because they refuse to do judgement.

8 The way of him that *is* laden with guilt *is* exceeding crooked:

But as for the pure, his work *is* right.

9 *It is* better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, Than with a contentious woman in a wide house.

10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil: His neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

thing to God, and, after thus making a vow, regrets it, reflects, and hesitates. (See Num. 30 : 3 f.; Eccl. 5 : 2, 4, 5.) 26a is similar to ver. 8b. **The threshing wheel.** (See Isa. 28 : 27 f.) 27. The verse means that the spirit of man comes from Jehovah (see Gen. 2 : 7), and thus is a lamp, searching out the inmost recesses of his being. It is a teaching much like the modern conception of conscience. 28b. **Is upheld,** render, *he upholds*. 29b. (See 16 : 31.) 30b is elliptical, but it is better to make **strokes** a second subject to **a** and render, *and strokes that reach, etc.*

**Chap. 21. 1.** From the description, **watercourses** are evidently canals, which are turned here and there for irrigating purposes, as in Egypt. 2. The verse is nearly identical with 16 : 2. (See 16 : 25 ; 14 : 12.) 3. This teaching is the same as that which is such a feature of the prophetic doctrine, and is found elsewhere as well. For it see especially Amos 5 : 22-24 ; Isa. 1 : 11-14 ; Hosea 6 : 6 ; Micah 6 : 6-8 ; 1 Sam. 15 : 22 ; Ps. 40 : 6 ; 50 : 7-14 ; 51 : 16, 17 ; Prov. 21 : 27 ; 15 : 8. 4a is similar to Ps. 101 : 5. **B.** (See 13 : 9 b ; 20 : 20 ; 24 : 20 ; Job 18 : 5, 6 ; 21 : 17.) Render, suggested partly by these passages: *Haughtiness of looks and pride of heart* (are closely connected) ; *the lamp of the wicked*

*fails.* This involves no change of consonants, reading **חֹתֶת**, *hōtēth*, for **חַטָּת**, *hātūth*. By this rendering the connection of **a** and **b** is not close, as often, but the meaning afforded is better than by the usual rendering. 5. **B** is similar especially to 28 : 20b. The connection of thought is not close, but is probably the following. The diligent in **a** are in **b** naturally contrasted with those who are not content with the results simply of diligence, but are anxious to become rich quickly by other means. 6. **They that seek them seek death,** render: (*is*) *snares of death*, following the text of G. and V., with a change of one consonant in the Hebrew, reading **מִוֹקְשֵׁה**, *mōq'shē*, for **מִוֹקְשֵׁה**, *mōb'hōq'shē*. The meaning thus afforded is a natural one, as it is not in MT. The meaning is: the acquisition of property by lying is first an unsubstantial process, second a deadly one. 8b. (See 20 : 11b.) 9. Practically identical with 25 : 24 ; 21 : 19 is very similar, see also 19 : 13 ; 27 : 15. On **a** see Ps. 102 : 7. **B** is literally: *Than a contentious woman and a house in common.* **A** suggests simply solitude, not danger or discomfort, as some have thought. The house-top was a common place of resort at times. **B** suggests the worst form of un congenial companionship. **Woman** would naturally be the wife or relative, probably wife. The thought of the

11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

12 The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.

13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

14 A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.

15 It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

18 The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.

19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise:

And when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

12 The righteous man considereth the house of the wicked;

How the wicked are overthrown to their ruin.

13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry, but shall not be heard.

14 A gift in secret pacifieth anger.

And a present in the bosom strong wrath.

15 It is joy to the righteous to do judgement;

But it is a destruction to the workers of iniquity.

16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding

Shall rest in the congregation of the dead.

17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man:

He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

18 The wicked is a ransom for the righteous;

And the treacherous cometh instead of the upright.

19 It is better to dwell in a desert land,

Than with a contentious and fretful woman.

20 There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise;

But a foolish man swalloweth it up.

21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

verse is: solitude is better than uncongenial companionship. 11. The verse is similar to 19: 25. 12. The righteous man . . . how the wicked are overthrown, render: *The righteous one . . . he overthroweth the wicked*, etc. The "righteous one,"  $\text{רַחֲמָנִים}$ , *rahmānīm*, is God, as in Job 34: 17. This gives a natural meaning to the verse, which is almost unmeaning in the ordinary renderings. The thought is similar to that of 22: 12b. 13. *Heard*, literally and better, *answered*. 14. The verse is similar to 17: 23. Here, as in that passage, the reference is to bribes, as is indicated by the phrases denoting secrecy: *in secret* and *in the bosom*. It is also indicated by the word in **b** translated *present*, which generally means *bribe*, and should be so rendered here. The verse refers to the practice of bribery, speaking of it simply as a fact, without expressing a judgment upon it. 15. Render **b** with A. V.; the parallelism favors R. V., but the meaning thus afforded is forced. 16. *Rest* is apparently simply equivalent to *dwell*. The thought is, as elsewhere, premature death is the punishment of sin. 17. *Pleasure* means especially feasting, as is indicated by the use of the word elsewhere, and by the parallelism here. *Oil* was used for anointing in preparation for a feast. The verse is a warning against self-indulgence. 18. This verse might seem to mean that God punishes the wicked for the sins of the righteous. This would be an unexampled teaching, however. The difficulty comes from the figurative use of the word *ransom*. The word literally means that which is paid as a means of deliverance from disaster, often from death. Used figuratively, its meaning would be similar, a

means of deliverance. The fact in mind, evidently, is that the righteous are sometimes in difficulties, but they are soon delivered from them, and the wicked experience them. In such a case the wicked may be described, from the standpoint of experience, as being a means of deliverance for the righteous. That this is an observation founded thus upon experience, and using popular phraseology, and not a theological formula, is evident from the fact that the uniform teaching of Proverbs is that afflictions upon the righteous must, in the nature of the case, be temporary. Punishments really belong to the wicked, not to the righteous. This is, then, only a stronger statement of the same thought as is found in 11: 8. See note on that passage. For a similar figurative use of ransom, see Isa. 43: 3. **In the stead of**, better: *in place of*. 19. *Desert*, better, *wilderness*. The general thought is the same as in ver. 9. 20. *Oil* is simply one specification added to the general statement *precious treasure*. It in **b** evidently refers to the general idea of "precious treasure and oil." Most interpreters suppose that it refers to the specific treasure mentioned in **a**, that in a given case a wise man stores up property and a foolish man spends it. This seems unnecessary. The frequent looseness of syntactical usage in Proverbs allows the general meaning for **b**, which is more suitable: a foolish man who has wealth wastes. The verse then teaches: a wise man saves, a fool wastes. 21. *If righteousness* in **b**,  $\text{יְדִיטָה}$ , *ḏhātā*, is genuine, it must have a different meaning from the same word in **a**. It is probably best, however, to omit it in **b**, following most manuscripts of G., and regard it as a scribal insertion from **a**.



22 A wise man scaeth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.

23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

24 Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

26 He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not.

27 The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

28 A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.

29 A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

30 There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.

31 The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord.

22 A wise man scaeth the city of the mighty, And bringeth down the strength of the confidence thereof.

23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue Keepeth his soul from troubles.

24 The proud and haughty man, scorner is his name.

He worketh in the arrogance of pride.

25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; For his hands refuse to labour.

26 There is that coveteth greedily all the day long: But the righteous giveth and withholdeth not.

27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: How much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind!

28 A false witness shall perish:

But the man that heareth shall speak unchallenged.

29 A wicked man hardeneth his face:

But as for the upright, he ordereth his ways.

30 There is no wisdom nor understanding

Nor counsel against the Lord.

31 The horse is prepared against the day of battle: But victory is of the Lord.

## CHAPTER XXII.

1 A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

2 The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

3 A prudent man forsoeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

4 By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

1 A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches.

And loving favour rather than silver and gold.

2 The rich and the poor meet together:

The Lord is the maker of them all:

3 A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself:

But the simple pass on, and suffer for it.

4 The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord Is riches, and honour, and life.

5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: He that keepeth his soul shall be far from them.

23. The verse is similar to 13 : 3 ; 18 : 21. **His soul**, better, *himself*. 24. The meaning of **a** is: a proud and haughty man is named scoffer; it is a definition of the word scoffer. **Scorner** (*scoffer*), the rendering of A. R. V. is the better. 25. **The desire** is of course a desire for ease. **Refuse**, better, *have refused*. 26. **There is that** means: there are those who, *i. e.*, the wicked, the implied subject. The contrast is this: the wicked are covetous, the righteous liberal. 27a is nearly identical with 15 : 8a. It is an abomination, because under the best of circumstances it is purely formal. **B. With a wicked mind**, better, *for a crime, i. e.*, as equivalent for, as compensation for a crime. 28a is similar to 19 : 5a, 9a. **B.** Render: *But a man who hears shall speak truthfully*. The rendering "truthfully" is confirmed by S. and T., and by the usage of the Hebrew word, נִצְחָה, *nēqāh*, in Job 23 : 7 ; Lam. 3 : 18. **B** is not an exact counterpart to **a**, but says that a man who simply reports what he has heard will speak truthfully. This seems to be the best view of this difficult verse, although it is possible that the text may be corrupt. 29b. A different reading of the Hebrew, that of the *Qrē*, may preferably be followed, so as to render: *But as for the upright, he considers his way, i. e.*, he so considers it as to do right, while in **a** is stated the unblushing

boldness of the wicked in following his own will when, as regularly, it is wrong. 30. **Against**, better: *over against, i. e.*, in comparison with, practically the same as *without*. 31. **A.** The horse regularly in the Old Testament was the animal for war, not for ordinary peaceful uses, and is so spoken of here. **B. Is of the Lord** (*Jehovah*), more literally: *belongs to Jehovah*, and so may be given to whomsoever he chooses.

**Chap. 22.** 1a. **Good** is not expressed, but is naturally implied. **B.** Render: *And favor is better than silver and gold*. 2. The verse is similar to 29 : 13. The thought is: men know distinctions among themselves, God does not recognize them, but regards men as equal. (See Job 34 : 19.) 3. The verse is identical in thought and nearly in form with 27 : 12. **Suffer for it**, better: *are punished*. This verse contrasts a wise prudence with foolhardiness. 4. In 3 : 16 and 8 : 18a these rewards are mentioned as coming from wisdom. It is one of many passages showing the close connection between wisdom and the fear of Jehovah. 5a. (See Job 18 : 8-10.) **B. Soul**, the word in the same phrase means life in 13 : 3 ; 16 : 17 ; 19 : 16. Here, however, the connection is different, so that that meaning seems inappropriate. It is best to render it, *himself*. *He that keepeth himself* means:

6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

11 He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.

12 The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.

13 The slothful man saith, *There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.*

14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.

15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it.

7 The rich ruleth over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender.

8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity: And the rod of his wrath shall fail.

9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; For he giveth of his bread to the poor.

10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; Yea, strife and ignominy shall cease.

11 He that loveth pureness of heart, For the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.

12 The eyes of the Lord preserve *him that hath knowledge*, But he overthroweth the words of the treacherous man.

13 The sluggard saith, *There is a lion without: I shall be murdered in the streets.*

14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: He that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.

15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his *gain*, And he that giveth to the rich, *cometh only to want.*

he who has self-control. (See also note on 19 : 8.)

**6. Child.** (See note on 20 : 11.) **In the way he should go.** This rendering means, in the right way. In order to obtain that meaning the word *right* should be expressed in the Hebrew text, as it is not. The literal rendering is: *according to his way*, which can hardly mean anything but according to his future course in life, his trade or occupation. This rendering, as well as the usual one, emphasizes the permanence of early teaching, although without an ethical reference. **7. Servant**, literally, *slave*. It is not necessary to suppose, however, that the reference is to actual servitude for debt, which was probably not very common, but to exactions and inconveniences which the debtor is obliged to endure from the creditor, which amount practically to slavery. **8.** The verse is similar to 6 : 12a; see note there. **The rod of his wrath** means the rod by which he has been accustomed to manifest his wrath in injury to others. **9. A bountiful eye**, render: *a benevolent look*; see the opposite expression in 23 : 6; 28 : 22. **B. Giveth**, render: *has given*. The meaning is that the benevolent look is an indication not only of benevolent intention, but of benevolent activity. **10.** The verse is conditional in fact, but not in form. **Strife**, פִּגְמָה, *din*, render *lawsuits*, the regular meaning elsewhere, from which there seems no reason to depart here. **11.** The verse can only be rendered naturally: *He who loves the pure of heart, whose lips are grace, a king is his friend*. The thought is: purity of heart and gracefulness of speech characterize a friend of a king. **12. Preserve him that hath knowledge**, render: *preserve knowledge*. This naturally means, as Fr. says, they continually

know or observe, nothing escapes the eyes of Jehovah. **A** indicates, therefore, the wide observation, the omniscience of Jehovah. **B** then gives one result of **a**, one consequence of this knowledge. **But**, render, *and*. **13. Murdered** (*slain*), the rendering of the A. R. V. is the better, since it does not bring in an additional idea, but refers to the agency of the lion mentioned in **a**; see the similar verse, 26 : 13. A lion in the streets of a city would be almost unexampled; the verse shows the slight excuse which serves a sluggard for inactivity. See 15 : 19, where, on the other hand, the difficulties are real. **14a** is similar to 23 : 27. **Mouth** refers to the enticing speech which is mentioned in other places. **Strange women.** (See note on 2 : 16.) **B.** Render: *He with whom Jehovah is angry shall fall therein*. **15a.** The statement as usually rendered is stronger than is elsewhere made, and stronger than the facts really warrant. Hence it is better to regard it as conditional in fact but not in form; if (in a given case) foolishness . . . the rod, etc. **Child.** (See note on 20 : 11.) Omit **but** in **b. 16.** Many have suspected the text, not unnaturally, for the current interpretations give little meaning. The difficulty seems to be that it is commonly assumed that the object to be supplied in **a** is that supplied in R. V., **gain**, or something similar. But more naturally it would be the word suggested just before, viz, poverty. Then the rendering of **a** would be: *He that oppresses the poor (tends) to increase (poverty) for himself*. **He that giveth to the rich** means one who seeks to prosper by currying favor with the rich. Thus the thought of the verse is: both the oppressor of the poor, and the one seeking the favor of the rich come to

17 Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

18 For *it is* a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee: they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

19 That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

20 Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

21 That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

22 Rob not the poor, because he *is* poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

23 For the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

26 Be not thou *one* of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.

27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

17 Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise,

And apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

18 For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee,

If they be established together upon thy lips.

19 That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made *them* known to thee this day, even to thee.

20 Have not I written unto thee excellent things Of counsels and knowledge;

21 To make thee know the certainty of the words of truth,

That thou mayest carry back words of truth to them that send thee?

22 Rob not the poor, because he is poor, Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

23 For the Lord will plead their cause, And despoil of life those that despoil them.

24 Make no friendship with a man that is given to anger;

And with a wrathful man thou shalt not go:

Lest thou learn his ways,

And get a snare to thy soul.

26 Be thou not one of them that strike hands, Or of them that are sureties for debts:

27 If thou hast not wherewith to pay, Why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

28 Remove not the ancient landmark, Which thy fathers have set.

29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings;

He shall not stand before mean men.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

I WHEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what *is* before thee:

2 And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.

1 WHEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler, Consider diligently him that is before thee;

2 And put a knife to thy throat, If thou be a man given to appetite.

poverty. **A** is understood by S. and T. in the way here translated.

For a discussion of the division of the book beginning with ver. 17, see the Introduction. Ver. 17-21 are an introduction to this division, 22: 17 to 24: 22. 17. It gives the best meaning to put part of ver. 18 with ver. 17, following G. in the division of the verses. They would then be rendered: . . . *unto my knowledge, for it is pleasant.* 18. *When thou keepest them within thee, they shall be established together upon thy lips.* Ver. 17 indicates that the writer is purposing to teach young men, teaching which he has made his own, but which is compiled from the words of the wise. Ver. 18 indicates that if these words are received in the heart they will find expression upon the lips. 20. Render: *Do I not write for thee, etc.*, a rhetorical question. Proverbs usually adopts the tone of oral instruction, here of written as well. **Of**, render *with*, *i. e.*, accompanied by. 21. **To them that send thee**, render as singular: *to him that sends thee, i. e.*, the father or guardian of the scholar. 22. **Because he is poor** is given as a reason, not for the injunction here given, but for the common prevalence of the practice of robbing the poor, *i. e.*, because, as poor, he

is helpless, unable to defend himself from robbery. **Oppress** is literally *crush*. A form of the same phrase, *crush in the gate*, is found in Job 5: 4. **B** refers to those who come to the place of justice in the gate seeking relief. 23a is similar to 23: 11. The verse is similar in spirit to Exod. 22: 21-23; Ps. 68: 5; 146: 9. 24. (See 15: 18; 29: 22.) 26, 27. (See note on 6: 1-5.) 28a is identical with 23: 10a. The verse is similar to part of Deut. 19: 14. (See also Deut. 27: 17; Hos. 5: 10; Job 24: 2.) 29. **Diligent**; render, *skillful*. It is best to regard the sentence as a virtual condition, if thou seest, etc., as in 26: 12; 29: 20. **Stand before** means, *serve, enter the service of*. The verse teaches that efficient work will not go unrewarded.

**Chap. 23. 2.** Of the various renderings proposed that of the R. V. is the best. Then a is to be regarded as an admonition to self-restraint. It is in harmony with this that the following verses show the need of self-restraint, because the food is liable to be a source of temptation and blind the judgment. The rendering, *and thou hast put*, etc., *i. e.*, thou hast brought thyself into danger of death, is not so good because the statement would be extreme.

3 Be not desirous of his dainties : for they are deceitful meat.

4 Labour not to be rich : cease from thine own wisdom.

5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

6 Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats :

7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he : Eat and drink, saith he to thee ; but his heart is not with thee.

8 The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.

9 Speak not in the ears of a fool : for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

10 Remove not the old landmark ; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless :

11 For their redeemer is mighty ; he shall plead their cause with thee.

12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

13 Withhold not correction from the child : for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

15 My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.

16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

17 Let not thine heart envy sinners : but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

18 For surely there is an end ; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

3 Be not desirous of his dainties ; Seeing they are deceitful meat.

4 Weary not thyself to be rich ; Cease from thine own wisdom.

5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?

For riches certainly make themselves wings, Like an eagle that flieth toward heaven.

6 Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye,

Neither desire thou his dainties ; For as he reckoneth within himself, so is he :

7 Eat and drink, saith he to thee ; But his heart is not with thee.

8 The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up,

And lose thy sweet words.

9 Speak not in the hearing of a fool ; For he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

10 Remove not the ancient landmark ; And enter not into the fields of the fatherless :

11 For their redeemer is strong ; He shall plead their cause against thee.

12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, And thine ears to the words of knowledge.

13 Withhold not correction from the child : For if thou beat him with the rod, he shall not die.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, And shalt deliver his soul from Sheol.

15 My son, if thine heart be wise, My heart shall be glad, even mine :

16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, When thy lips speak right things.

17 Let not thine heart envy sinners : But be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long :

18 For surely there is a reward ; And thy hope shall not be cut off.

3. This verse does not express the same thought as ver. 2, but the additional thought that such an invitation to be a guest is not from benevolence, as one might think, but belongs to a plan for his own advantage. 4b. Render, *Cease from thine understanding*. The clause is elliptical, but evidently means, *cease from making use of thine understanding in an undue endeavor to become rich*. 5. Render, *Do thine eyes fly upon it? it is not; for it certainly makes for itself wings*, etc. "It" in each case means wealth, not stated, but implied in ver. 4. "Fly" in a means look, an unusual expression, but sufficiently intelligible to make emendation unnecessary. The verse expresses the fleeting nature of wealth. 6. An evil eye means a malevolent look. (See 22 : 9.) 7. Render, nearly with Fr., *For when he has reckoned within himself, then he says to thee : Eat and drink*, etc. This gives the best meaning, and the difficulties in the Hebrew syntax are not insuperable. The meaning is, his invitation is the result of calculation, not the spontaneous expression of his heart. 8a means, the food will not prove appetizing under these circumstances. In b the words are the words of thanks for the invitation. 9. In the hearing of, better literally, *In the ears of*. It does not mean, as the rendering of R. V. would imply, do not speak so that

a fool can hear you, but do not speak directly to him. 10a is identical with 22 : 28a. 11. Redeemer. This word is applied to God also in Job 19 : 25. This is the word which designates the next of kin, whose duty it was to avenge bloodshed, redeem property, etc. For his duties in reference to land, see Lev. 25 : 25. 13, 14. See note on 19 : 18; here the thought is similar. Ver. 14 especially shows plainly that the thought of both verses is, a child unpunished will go in evil ways, the punishment of which is premature death. Therefore punish him and save him from death. Child. (See note on 20 : 11.) Render ver. 14, *Do thou beat . . . and thou shalt*. 15, 16. The thought of the two verses is very similar. Ver. 15 speaks of wisdom in the mind; ver. 16, in the speech, the expression of the other. 15. Heart, in a, render, *mind*. In b the word means the seat of the emotions. 16. Reins (*heart*), the rendering of A. R. V. is the better; the meaning is the same as of "heart" in 15b. 18. The verse is nearly identical with 24 : 14b and c. Reward, better, *future*. Hope is chiefly of long life. The meaning is general; in the time of prosperity of sinners the righteous can hope for better things in the future, and the hope will not be disappointed. The reference is thus chiefly to this life, although the future life is not excluded.

19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

20 Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

27 For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.

28 She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, *shall thou say*, and I

19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, And guide thine heart in the way.

20 Be not among winebibbers; Among gluttonous eaters of flesh:

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty:

And drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee,

And despise not thy mother when she is old.

23 Buy the truth, and sell it not;

Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: And he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

25 Let thy father and thy mother be glad,

And let her that bare thee rejoice.

26 My son, give me thine heart,

And let thine eyes delight in my ways.

27 For a whore is a deep ditch;

And a strange woman is a narrow pit.

28 Yea, she lieth in wait as a robber,

And increaseth the treacherous among men.

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions?

Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause?

Who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine;

They that go to seek out mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,

When it giveth its colour in the cup,

When it goeth down smoothly:

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent,

And stingeth like an adder.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange things,

And thine heart shall utter froward things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the

midst of the sea,

Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, *shall thou say*, and I was not hurt;

(See 14 : 32, and note on 11 : 7.) **19. The way** is elliptical for the right way, so often mentioned in Proverbs. **20. Among** in both clauses means *one of*. **22.** The thought of the verse is chiefly an admonition to heed the advice of parents. But it is also intended to inculcate respect for them in general, as appears from **b.** **25.** This verse is the conclusion of ver. **24;** the meaning is, be wise so that thy parents may rejoice. **26. Heart,** better, *mind*, with the idea of careful attention, which is in harmony with the parallelism. This is not a statement attributed to wisdom, but is by the author. **27a** is similar to 22 : 14. **A strange woman.** (See note on 2 : 16.) **28. Lieth in wait,** as in 7 : 12. In ver. 27 the danger is passive; in ver. 28 it is active. **B.** This is because those who follow her would inevitably be false to some other interests. **29.** This comes in appropriately here, since the temptations from wine and from dissolute women are often connected. **Redness** probably should be *dullness*, heaviness. **Wounds without cause.** Drunken men notoriously fight without any real reason. **30.** On a see Isa. 5 : 11. **Mixed wine.** (See note on 9 : 2.) **31c** should be joined to ver. 32, rendering, *It goes*

*down smoothly* (i. e., at the first), (but) *at the last*, etc. **32. Adder.** The Hebrew word means a serpent that was especially poisonous, but the kind is uncertain. **33.** The verse refers to the distortion of the senses and the mind through drunkenness. **34.** This verse naturally continues ver. 33. The sensations of the drunken man are compared to the sensations of one on a sea voyage. There is no reference in the comparison to the thought of danger. **In the midst of the sea** does not mean *at the bottom of the sea*, as some have supposed, but simply on the *high sea*, in a vessel of some kind. **A mast.** The meaning of the Hebrew word, **מַסְבֵּל**, *hībēl*, is uncertain, but more probably it is *rope*. *Upon the top of a rope* means on a heap of rope; this is mentioned merely as a part of the furnishing of the vessel, and so gives simply a little more specific phrase for the general idea *at sea*. In connection with this verse it should be remembered that in the Old Testament generally the sea is regarded as something terrible. So a sea voyage is necessarily an uncomfortable thing, the thought of seasickness no doubt being present, although it is not specifically mentioned in this description. **35.** This verse describes the drunkard beginning to awake to consciousness.

was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

They have beaten me, and I felt it not: When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1 BE not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

2 For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.

3 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:

4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

5 A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

6 For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

7 Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.

8 He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person.

9 The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

11 If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain;

12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

1 BE not thou envious against evil men, Neither desire to be with them:

2 For their heart studieth oppression, And their lips talk of mischief.

3 Through wisdom is an house builded; And by understanding it is established:

4 And by knowledge are the chambers filled With all precious and pleasant riches.

5 A wise man is strong;

Yea, a man of knowledge increaseth might.

6 For by wise guidance thou shalt make thy war: And in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

7 Wisdom is too high for a fool:

He openeth not his mouth in the gate.

8 He that deviseth to do evil,

Men shall call him a mischievous person.

9 The thought of the foolish is sin:

And the scorner is an abomination to men.

10 If thou faint in the day of adversity,

Thy strength is small.

11 Deliver them that are carried away unto death, And those that are ready to be slain see that

thou hold back.

12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not this:

Doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know

it?

And shall not he render to every man according to his work?

He observes his injuries but makes light of them because he was not conscious of pain when they were inflicted. He desires to become fully awake in order that he may again seek wine. The implied antecedent for **it** is naturally wine. In ver. 29-35 there is an evident warning against drunkenness. These verses give a description of many of the experiences of the drunken, and in such a way that the folly of drunkenness is manifest.

**Chap. 24. 1a.** A better rendering is, *Do not thou envy evil men.* The Hebrew form of expression is the same as in 23:17. **3.** The verse is similar to 14:1a. It is not probable that ver. 3, 4 were intended to form a distinct contrast to ver. 1, 2, as some have thought. **3, 4. Through . . . by . . . by.** The Hebrew form of expression is the same in all, designating instrument, *by means of.* **5. Increaseth.** Hebrew idiom suggests that this should be rendered *shows.* **B** is not intended to be a stronger statement than **a**, but to express substantially the same idea. **6a** is similar to 20:18b; **b** is identical with 11:14b. (See also 15:22.) **7.** The usual rendering of **b** seems out of harmony with many other statements of Proverbs concerning the garrulity of fools. Even in the gate, *i. e.*, in the conversation of the wise, he might be expected to intrude. It is more in accordance with the facts, therefore, to give another rendering, which is to be preferred; in-

stead of **He openeth not, He may not open.**

The meaning then is not that he keeps silent of his own accord, but that he is not allowed to interfere with the deliberations of the wise, because they are beyond his comprehension. **9.** Render **a**, *A plan of folly (i. e., a foolish plan) is sin*, a statement concerning the moral quality of folly. **10.** The only natural rendering is, *If thou art indolent, in the day of adversity thy strength will be small.* It is a statement of a natural result of indolence, viz, lack of strength in the day of adversity. **11.** To explain this verse as referring simply to the victims of oppression is too weak for the strong language used. It must refer to those condemned to death, and of course by implication unjustly. The usual rendering of **b** presupposes a syntactical usage for which there are only a few examples, and those not entirely parallel. It involves less difficulty, therefore, and also gives a better meaning, to make a new division of verses, ending ver. 11 with **slain**, and then render, *If thou restrainest (thyself), because thou sayest, Behold now we do not know this; . . . and he will render,* etc. The thought is, if you refrain from interfering in a capital case where injustice is being done, and attempt to justify yourselves by saying we do not know all about it, it may be all right; then be sure that God knows all about it, and he holds men accountable. The teaching is, therefore, that one must be very particular to find out and right injustice, and not attempt to

13 My son, eat thou honey, because *it is good*; and the honeycomb, *which is sweet to thy taste*;

14 *So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul*: when thou hast found *it*, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

15 Lay not wait, O wicked *man*, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place:

16 For a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth;

18 Lest the Lord see *it*, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

19 Fret not thyself because of evil *men*, neither be thou envious at the wicked;

20 For there shall be no reward to the evil *man*; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

21 My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change:

22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?

23 These *things also belong* to the wise. *It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.*

24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:

13 My son, eat thou honey, for it is good;

And the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:

14 So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul: If thou hast found it, then shall there be a reward,

And thy hope shall not be cut off.

15 Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the habitation of the righteous;

Spoil not his resting place:

16 For a righteous man falleth seven times, and riseth up again:

But the wicked are overthrown by calamity.

17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, And let not thine heart be glad when he is overthrown:

18 Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, And he turn away his wrath from him.

19 Fret not thyself because of evil-doers;

Neither be thou envious at the wicked;

20 For there will be no reward to the evil man;

The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

21 My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: And meddle not with them that are given to change:

22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly;

And who knoweth the destruction of them both?

23 These also are sayings of the wise.

To have respect of persons in judgement is not good.

24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous;

Peoples shall curse him, nations shall abhor him:

hide behind any plea of ignorance. 13b, render, and honeycomb is sweet to thy taste. 14b and c are nearly identical with 23: 18. A, render, So know wisdom to be, etc. Reward, render, future, as in 23: 18, and see note there for the meaning. A speaks of the pleasantness of wisdom, having reference to ver. 13; b and c give another related thought, its profitability. 16. This verse gives a reason for the admonition of ver. 15, indicating that the acts there mentioned are not only sinful, but foolish, because unavailing. 17. In several passages Proverbs sets up a high standard for the treatment of enemies, so especially here, and in 25: 21; see also 20: 22, and 24: 29. 18. The Lord see it is subordinate in fact but not in form, lest being intended to be connected especially with displease. The thought is, lest when Jehovah sees it, it displease him. B. Some have thought that the meaning is that Jehovah would cease to punish the man simply because of the rejoicing over his punishment. But that is not only a trivial thought, but also a superficial one, which therefore can hardly be the true interpretation. It is more likely that the intention is to emphasize especially the sin of this rejoicing, which does indeed appear from the fact stated in a that it is displeasing to Jehovah. It is more in harmony with a, therefore, to suppose that b means that the sin of the one rejoicing would be the greater of the two, so that the punishment would be turned away from its original destina-

tion and turned to him. 19. The verse is very similar in thought and phraseology to Ps. 37: 1, and also similar to Ps. 37: 7, 8. 20. Reward, better, future. (See note on 23: 18.) B is identical with 13: 9b, except for the absence of the conjunction here, and similar to 20: 20. (See note on 13: 9.) 21b. Them that are given to change is not a natural phrase for the meaning, inclined to rebel, which is usually assigned. Therefore render, Have nothing to do with those hating (them), reading שׂוֹנִים, šōnim, for שׂוֹנִים, šōnim. This rendering involves no change in the consonantal text, but supposes the not infrequent loss of a silent letter. 22. The use of both in b makes it evident that their and of (from) them both refer to Jehovah and the king. The phrases indicate source, referring to the calamity coming from them upon those hating them. The other view, that these phrases refer to the two parties, those hating Jehovah, and those hating the king, is unnatural.

23. Another division of the book begins here, see Introduction. B is similar to 28: 21a, and, in thought, to 18: 5a. 24. Wicked, righteous, both are evidently used here as legal terms, in reference to the human law. Peoples, nations. Since both words are plural, and the second usually designates other nations in contrast with Israel, the meaning here can hardly be limited to Israel. The reference is not definite, however, it means men in general, in Israel and outside. This form of expression may naturally have been chosen to emphasize

25 But to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.

26 Every man shall kiss *his* lips that giveth a right answer.

27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.

28 Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause; and deceive *not* with thy lips.

29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.

30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

32 Then I saw, and considered *it* well: I looked upon *it*, and received instruction.

33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

25 But to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.

26 He kisseth the lips

That giveth a right answer.

27 Prepare thy work without, and make it ready for thee in the field; and afterwards build thine house.

28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause;

And deceive not with thy lips.

29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me;

I will render to the man according to his work.

30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, the face thereof was covered with nettles, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

32 Then I beheld, and considered well:

I saw, and received instruction.

33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,

A little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come as a robber;

And thy want as an armed man.

#### CHAPTER XXV.

1 THESE *are* also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.

2 *It* is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings *is* to search out a matter.

3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings *is* unsearchable.

1 THESE also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing:

But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable.

the far-reaching condemnation of an unjust man; and also to give a universal rather than a national tone to the proverb. **25. Rebuke**, render *punish*, a well-attested meaning of the Hebrew word, and here to be preferred from the connection. This verse shows the just judge, in contrast with the unjust judge in the preceding. **26. He kisseth the lips** means he manifests friendship, and so by implication wins friendship. A kiss was a token of friendship. The kiss of friendship or love was commonly on the cheek in antiquity. This passage gives the only explicit mention of kissing the lips in the Old Testament, but Cant. 4 : 11 and 5 : 1 perhaps allude to such a practice. **27.** A house was less necessary for sustaining life than the crops; to prepare it before the latter was to manifest a desire for display. This would be particularly true in the comparatively mild climate of Palestine. The teaching is: seek comfort rather than display. The traditional and usual interpretation of **build thy house** as meaning *take a wife* is contrary to usage. In the figurative use, the phrase does not mean *take a wife*, but *raise up offspring*, as in Deut. 25 : 9, etc. That meaning here, leaving marriage only to be implied, is manifestly inappropriate. **28. A** would in form include all giving of testimony without cause. But the chief instance of this would be that suggested by **b**, false testimony, which is probably meant in **a**. **29.** This verse expressly sets up a higher

standard than the law of retaliation, which is recognized and allowed in Exod. 21 : 23-25; Lev. 24 : 19 f; Deut. 19 : 21. Those passages, however, refer to judicial infliction, while this verse probably refers to private vengeance, which would be quite a different matter. **30.** Note the parallelism between **slothful and man void of understanding**. (See 26 : 16.) **31c.** (See Isa. 5 : 5.) The stone wall was a boundary wall, designed especially for a protection against wild animals. **33.** The verse is identical with 6 : 10; **34**, nearly identical with 6 : 11. See notes on those verses.

**Chap. 25.** The second collection of the Solomonic proverbs begins here; see the Introduction. **1. Copied out.** This seems to fairly express the meaning. Elsewhere the Hebrew word means *remove*, here probably to remove from one book to another, *to copy*, and so by implication *to collect*. **2. Thing, matter**, the Hebrew word is the same for both. **A** means: it is the glory of God that he is beyond entire human comprehension, he is more than man. **B** refers especially to the office of a king as a judge; it is his glory to investigate and give a right decision in difficult cases. The verse is a contrast between the special glory respectively of God and of the king. **3.** The verse probably has no direct connection with ver. 2. It is in the Hebrew a comparison in fact but not in form. The A. R. V. correctly puts it in the form of a



4 Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.

5 Take away the wicked *from* before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men :

7 For better *it is* that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest *thou know not* what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself*; and discover not a secret to another :

10 Lest he that heareth *it* put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.

11 A word fitly spoken *is like* apples of gold in pictures of silver.

12 As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, *so is* a wise reprovee upon an obedient ear.

13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, *so is* a faithful messenger to them that send him : for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

4 Take away the dross from the silver,

And there cometh forth a vessel for the finer :

5 Take away the wicked *from* before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

6 Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king,

And stand not in the place of great men :

7 For better *it is* that it be said unto thee, Come up hither;

Than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince,

Whom thine eyes have seen.

8 Go not forth hastily to strive, Lest *thou know not* what to do in the end thereof, When thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself*,

And disclose not the secret of another :

10 Lest he that heareth *it* revile thee,

And thine infamy turn not away.

11 A word fitly spoken

*Is like* apples of gold in baskets of silver.

12 As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,

*So is* a wise reprovee upon an obedient ear.

13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, *So is* a faithful messenger to them that send him ;

For he refresheth the soul of his masters.

comparison. **Heart** is here used in the general meaning of the inner man, the whole inner life. **Unsearchable**, this is not by God, see 21 : 1, but by men. The thought of 20 : 5a concerning men in general is here put in a stronger form of kings. **4.** Most commentators think that it is necessary to correct the text of **b**, following G., so as to render somewhat like: "And it comes forth perfectly pure" (TOY). The changes made are slight, but the emended text is objectionable, because it states only what is self-evident. The present text gives no difficulty. The objection usually urged, that simple purification does not produce a vessel, overlooks the possibility of elliptical phraseology, such as is common in the condensed style of proverbs. Remembering the possibility of this, one sees that the thought of the verse is good and appropriate. The thought is: purification from dross is the chief thing in the preparation of a vessel adapted for any desired ornamentation by the silversmith. Other steps in the process are passed over as comparatively unimportant. In a similar way, in ver. 5, removal of the wicked is the chief thing for the establishment of a kingdom in righteousness. **6, 7.** These verses are similar to Luke 14 : 8-11. Ver. 6 is general, advice that is good for any occasion. The same is probably true of ver. 7, although it may have in mind a feast, or some similar occasion at which there was a fairly specific order of arrangement. The thought of **7a** and **b** is: it is better to take a humble seat and be promoted, than to take an exalted one and be degraded. **7c** is joined by most commentators with ver. 8, following G., S., Sym., for two reasons: first,

symmetry, thus ver. 6 and 7, expressing one thought, have four lines, and ver. 8 has four lines; and second, the clause is claimed to have no meaning with ver. 7. Irregularity of form is too common in this part of Proverbs to make the first argument one of much force. In answer to the second, it may be said that the clause is positively inappropriate in ver. 8 without change of text. Without it, ver. 8 is a warning against going to law *without due consideration*. This statement, however, would imply the evidence of an eye-witness, and be inconsistent with that idea. Also, a suitable meaning in ver. 7 is obtained by regarding this statement as intended to emphasize the disgrace of the degradation, because it takes place after one is actually seated and gazing at the prince. **Prince** refers to the "king" and "great men" of ver. 6; it might be used of either. **8.** For meaning see note on previous verse. **Neighbor**, the opponent in the suit. **9, 10.** For meaning see note on 11 : 13. **11. A word fitly spoken**, the literal rendering is probably, *A word spoken in its time, i. e., at the right time*, similar to 15 : 23b. **B**, the meaning is doubtful. It probably should be rendered, *Is (like) fruit of gold (i. e., golden oranges) in engraved work of silver*. The comparison is made from the standpoint of beauty; the thought is of the beauty of an engraved work of silver, as a part of which, by way of contrast, appear oranges in gold. **12. Ornament**, probably better, *necklace*. The point of the comparison is the same as in ver. 11. **13a** is similar in phraseology to 26 : 1a, but the thought is somewhat different. **The cold of snow.**

14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift *is like* clouds and wind without rain.

15 By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

16 Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

17 Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.

18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour *is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.*

19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble *is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.*

20 *As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.*

21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.

23 The north wind driveth away rain: *so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*

24 *It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.*

14 *As clouds and wind without rain, so is he that boasteth himself of his gifts falsely.*

15 By long forbearing is a ruler persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

16 Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee;

Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

17 Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and hate thee.

18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour

*is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.*

19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble

*is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.*

20 *As one that taketh off a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.*

21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.

23 The north wind bringeth forth rain:

*So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.*

24 *It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a contentious woman in a wide house.*

The reference is to snow brought from the mountains for cooling drinks, as was often done in ancient times, and in modern times as well.

**The time of harvest.** This was from the middle of April to the middle of June, a time in which the weather was dry and hot. **14b** refers to one who boasts of liberality but does not give, there is great boasting but no result.

**15. Ruler,** better, *judge*, a common meaning elsewhere. The meaning is that a mild demeanor before a judge inclines him toward one, which is put in a more general form in **b**, mild speech removes the hardest obstacles.

**16.** A warning against over-indulgence in good things. **17.** A similar warning against over-indulgence in society. **18a** uses the phraseology of Exod. 20 : 16, and nearly of Deut. 5 : 20.

**19. Broken** probably is literally *bad*. **Out of joint,** render, *unsteady*.

**20.** Many have thought that the text must be changed, chiefly because **b** is thought to demand some *painful* effect, which **a** does not indicate. There is no reason, however, why the verse may not be regarded as having a more general reference, being designed to speak of actions which are *inappropriate, out of place*. This certainly is true of all the actions named. *Nitre (soda),* the rendering of A. R. V. is the better. *Vinegar* is inappropriate as applied to soda, because the action of the acid destroys the effect of the alkali.

**22.** The thought of **a** has been understood in two ways. The language has been thought to mean really revenge, here a noble form of revenge. It has also been understood as a strong phrase for action that causes pain, here it brings to the enemy the salutary pain of repentance. But neither explanation is satisfac-

tory. It is difficult to conceive of any natural origin of such a phrase as "heap coals of fire on his head" which would make it a commendable action. The following rendering is suggested for ver. 22, which is fully as natural as the ordinary translation, from the standpoint of the Hebrew. *If thou puttest burning coals upon his head, then Jehovah will requite thee.* The verse is then in contrast with ver. 21. That verse inculcates benevolent treatment of an enemy in need. This verse teaches that if, on the contrary, he is treated with hostility, strictly as an enemy, Jehovah will punish the doer of the act. Putting burning coals on the head is naturally a hostile act, as in the similar phrase in Ps. 140 : 10a. **23. The north wind.** It is commonly assumed that "north" is here used in a general way as including, and so equivalent to, northwest or west. It would not be difficult to suppose that it might thus include *northwest*. But there is no instance of its being used as equivalent to *west*, not even Amos, 8 : 12, which is often quoted. Further, the wind which brings rain, and hence is the prevailing wind during the rainy season, is not the northwest wind, but the west or southwest, while it is the northwest wind that prevails in summer during the long dry season. The only possible explanation, therefore, would seem to be the following: The north wind is found commonly only in October. It does not at once bring rain, but the rainy season commences soon after it begins to prevail, by the last of October. Hence the north wind is here spoken of as the precursor of the rainy season. The thought in **a** and **b** is the relation of cause and effect. **24.** This verse is practically identical with 21 : 9; see note there.

25 As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

26 A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.

27 It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

25 As cold waters to a thirsty soul,

So is good news from a far country.

26 As a troubled fountain, and a corrupted spring, so is a righteous man that giveth way before the wicked.

27 It is not good to eat much honey:

So for men to search out their own glory is not glory.

28 He whose spirit is without restraint

is like a city that is broken down and hath no wall.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1 AS snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.

2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back.

4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage.

7 The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

1 AS snow in summer, and as rain in harvest,

So honour is not seemly for a fool.

2 As a sparrow in her wandering, as the swallow in her flying,

So the curse that is causeless lighteth not.

3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,

And a rod for the back of fools.

4 Answer not a fool according to his folly,

Lest thou also be like unto him.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly,

Lest he be wise in his own conceit.

6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool

Cutteth off his own feet, and drinketh in damage.

7 The legs of the lame hang loose:

So is a parable in the mouth of fools.

25. (See 15 : 30b.) 26. Corrupted, perhaps better, *ruined*. **Giveth way**, literally, *is moved*, i. e., falls, the meaning being: he is overcome by the wicked, defeated by them. Both **a** and **b** give cases of the spoiling of what is in itself good and a blessing to others. 27a is similar to ver. 16. **B** has given much trouble, and many suggestions of change of text have been made. The simplest change, which is satisfactory and may be accepted, is merely the change of one vowel, with no change of consonants, reading קַבֵּד, *kābhēdh*, for קַבֹּהֶל, *kābhōlh*. This gives the rendering of A. R. V., *is grievous*, instead of *is not glory* of R. V. (See 27 : 3.) Perhaps burdensome would be better than "grievous." "Glory," probably better, *honor*. **To search out** means to seek for immoderately. The whole verse, then, gives the thought: excess in a good thing is not good. Courses which lead to prosperity are good. But to aim primarily at one's own honor is burdensome to one's self and to others. 28. The thought is that such a one is defenseless, especially against temptation and the force of the passions.

**Chap. 26.** 1 and 3-12 are concerning fools.

1. The verse is similar to ver. 8; 19 : 10; 25 : 13a is similar in form but different in thought. A little snow usually falls on the hills of Palestine in the winter, but not very much. Of course it would be unheard of in summer. Harvest is usually reckoned as lasting from the middle of April to the middle of June. Showers are very rare in May, and unknown from that time till October. So in harvest rain would be practically unknown. The thought of the

verse is that of incongruity. 2. **Lighteth not**, better, *does not come to pass*. The point of comparison is that no definite object is reached. A curse on any one uttered without reason produces no result. 3b is similar to 10 : 13b, 19 : 29b. In **a** the thought is, apparently, whip and bridle for horse and ass. The form of statement here adopted is rhetorical, being chosen for the sake of brevity in the parallelism. 4, 5. Since these verses are put by the side of each other, it is apparent that they were not considered by the compilers to be contradictory. In fact, it is only apparently that they are so. Each states in a forcible way one side of a truth, as a proverb usually does. Perhaps the thought of the two verses cannot be more definitely stated than this: what to do depends on circumstances; answer not the fool when there is danger of being like him; answer him certainly often enough so that he may not think himself unanswerable. 6. See 10 : 26, and the contrasted thought in 25 : 13. **Cutteth off his own feet**. This means that the prospect of the message being delivered is as poor as if he were his own messenger and he himself had no feet; he has thus no means of sending a message. **Drinketh in**, better, simply *drinks*, i. e., fills himself with, somewhat as in Job 15 : 16. 7b is identical with 9b. **Parable**, render, *proverb*, it is the same word as that which appears in the title to the book, מָשָׁל, *māshāl*. (See note on 1 : 1.) The point of the comparison is: valuelessness for practical use. The legs of the lame are of no practical value for locomotion; neither is a proverb of value in the mouth of a fool, although a means of effective speech in the

8 As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool.

9 As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

10 The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.

11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.

14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.

15 The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

18 As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death,

19 So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?

20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire: so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

22 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

23 Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

8 As a bag of gems in a heap of stones, So is he that giveth honour to a fool.

9 As a thorn that goeth up into the hand of a drunkard,

So is a parable in the mouth of fools.

10 As an archer that woundeth all, So is he that hireth the fool and he that hireth them that pass by.

11 As a dog that returneth to his vomit, So is a fool that repeateth his folly.

12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

13 The sluggard saith, There is a lion in the way; A lion is in the streets.

14 As the door turneth upon its hinges, So doth the sluggard upon his bed.

15 The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish; It wearieth him to bring it again to his mouth.

16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit Than seven men that can render a reason.

17 He that passeth by, and vexeth himself with strife belonging not to him,

Is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

18 As a madman who casteth firebrands, Arrows, and death;

19 So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, And saith, Am not I in sport?

20 For lack of wood the fire goeth out: And where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth.

21 As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire; So is a contentious man to inflame strife.

22 The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

23 Fervent lips and a wicked heart Are like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross.

mouth of one who knows how to use it. The thought of ver. 9 is a little different. 8. As a bag of gems in a heap of stones (*As one that bindeth a stone in a sling*), the rendering of the A. R. V. is to be preferred. The thought, as in ver. 1, is of that which is incongruous. The binding, securely fastening, of a stone in a sling is out of harmony with the very purpose of a sling. 9b is identical with 7b, see note there. *Goeth up into* would mean *pierces*, better, *comes into*, i. e., he carries it about as a weapon. *Thorn* is a thorn bush or branch. The point of the comparison here is the probability of injuring one's self, thus going beyond the thought of ver. 7. The picture is of a drunken man going about with a thorn bush in his hand, with which he would be very apt to hurt himself. So a fool in attempting to use a proverb would injure himself. Some have thought that the idea was of injury to others, but it does not seem likely that a drunken man could be thought of as doing much injury to others with no other weapon than a thorn bush. 10. Many have thought the text corrupt, as it seems to give no connected meaning. A change in the vowels of one word may be accepted, reading *אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּח*, *as'khār*, for *אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּח*, *as'okhār*, before *כָּסִיל*, *kas'il*, which gives the following translation, that of Delitzsch: *Much produces all; but the hire of the fool and of the one hiring (him)*

*passes away*. A means that he who has is generally in a way to gain more; b gives an exception, when one hires a fool it is unprofitable to both. 11a is quoted in 2 Peter 2 : 22. 12a is similar to 3 : 7a; b, identical with 29 : 20b. The verse is a virtual condition, if thou seest, as in 22 : 29; 29 : 20. **Fool**, the meaning here is the same as in 8 : 5.

13-16 are concerning sluggards. 13 is similar to 22 : 13. 14. (See 6 : 9 f.; 24 : 33.) The thought is that each turns back and forth, but does not move from the place. 15a is identical with 19 : 24a; b, similar to 19 : 24b. 16. **Render a reason**, better, *answer discreetly*. The terms sluggard and fool are very similar; see the parallelism in 24 : 30. 17. The verse is similar in thought to 25 : 8. It is better to render, *He that vexes himself with strife not belonging to him, is like one that takes a passing dog by the ears*. "Passing," i. e., not belonging to him, with which he need not have anything to do. The folly of meddling with that which is not one's business is the prominent thought in both clauses. 18. **Madman**, probably better, *a stupid man*. 20. The thought of the verse is similar to that of 16 : 28. (See also 22 : 10.) 22. The verse is identical with 18 : 8; see note there.

23-28 speak of various kinds of wrong speech. 23. **Heart** is here used in the sense of moral character. **An earthen vessel**, it is better to

24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him ;

25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not : for there are seven abominations in his heart.

26 Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.

27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein ; and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it ; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, But he layeth up deceit within him :

25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not ; For there are seven abominations in his heart :

26 Though his hatred cover itself with guile, His wickedness shall be openly shewed before the congregation.

27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein : And he that rolleth a stone, it shall return upon him.

28 A lying tongue hateth those whom it hath wounded ; And a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1 BOAST not thyself of to-morrow ; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth ; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty ; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.

4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous ; but who is able to stand before envy ?

5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend ; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb ; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart : so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not ; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity : for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

1 BOAST not thyself of to-morrow ;

For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth ;

A stranger, and not thine own lips.

3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty ; but a fool's vexation is heavier than them both.

4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous ;

But who is able to stand before jealousy ?

5 Better is open rebuke

Than love that is hidden.

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend :

But the kisses of an enemy are profuse.

7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb :

But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, So is a man that wandereth from his place.

9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart : So doth the sweetness of a man's friend that cometh of hearty counsel.

10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not ;

And go not to thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity :

Better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

render, according to the usual meaning of the word, a *potsherd*, a fragment of earthenware. This affords a more exact comparison than the rendering of the R. V. *Silver dross*, the dross left in refining silver, often used, as mentioned here, in glazing pottery, giving to it a brilliant appearance. The thought in both members, then, is: shining, appearing to be valuable, but actually worthless. 25a. **Believe**, rather, *trust*. 26. The verse is probably not to be connected closely with ver. 24 and 25, it is really a generalization of the thought there expressed, hence there should be a period at the end of ver. 25. Render, more literally: *Hatred may cover itself with guile, (yet) his wickedness, etc.* "His" refers to the one hating, implied in "hatred" of a. **Before the congregation**, literally, *in an assembly*. The meaning probably is: in some public assembly, without specifying it more closely. The statement is a general one; hatred may attempt to conceal itself, but it will ultimately manifest itself publicly. 28. The parallelism is not very close. The chief point of connection between a and b is the general thought that harm is likely to be done by the mouth. A lying

tongue, a liar, in whom it is of course the tongue that is chiefly considered.

**Chap. 27. 1.** The verse is similar to James 4: 13-16. **2. A stranger** means here simply another. **3. Sand.** (See Job 6: 3.) **Heavier** means more burdensome. **5a.** Either from friend or foe, no restriction is given. **B,** it is so hidden that it makes no manifestation of its presence, either by praise or rebuke. **6. Faithful**, perhaps better, *sincere*. As such they are naturally for one's benefit. **Profuse** means too abundant, suggesting insincerity. (See ver. 14.) **8. Place** means home. **9b** is probably to be rendered: *And the sweetness of his friend makes strong the soul*. This rendering requires a slight change in the consonants of one word, reading מִשְׁכָּח, *mē'āçim*, for מִשְׁכָּח, *mē'āçith*, but the text as it stands is almost unintelligible. **Sweetness** means pleasing conversation, as in 16: 21. "His" refers directly to the person mentioned in a, thus really any one. **10b** presents the idiom of exaggerated contrast, like 8: 10; see note there. It is simply a strong way of saying: in calamity go first to a proved friend rather than to a brother, you are more

11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.

12 A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.

13 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.

15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.

16 Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.

17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

18 Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof; so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.

19 As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

20 Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

21 Is the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.

22 Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

24 For riches are not for ever; and doth the crown endure to every generation?

25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.

26 The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.

11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, That I may answer him that reproacheth me.

12 A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself:

But the simple pass on, and suffer for it.

13 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; And hold him in pledge that is surety for a strange woman.

14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, It shall be counted a curse to him.

15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day

And a contentious woman are alike:

16 He that would restrain her restraineth the wind, And his right hand encountereth oil.

17 Iron sharpeneth iron; So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

18 Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof;

And he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.

19 As in water face answereth to face,

So the heart of man to man.

20 Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied;

And the eyes of man are never satisfied.

21 The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold,

And a man is tried by his praise.

22 Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle among bruised corn,

Yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, And look well to thy herds;

24 For riches are not for ever;

And doth the crown endure unto all generations?

25 The hay is carried, and the tender grass sheweth itself,

And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in.

26 The lambs are for thy clothing,

And the goats are the price of the field:

apt to find help there. The thought of 18 : 24b is the same; see also note on 17 : 17. The general reason for this counsel is given in **c**. **Near . . . far off**, these refer to feeling, not space. **11**. This is in the form of an admonition of a father or teacher, as in many other cases in Proverbs. **B** is nearly identical with Ps. 119 : 42a. **12**. The verse is identical in thought, and nearly in form, with 22 : 3. **13**. The verse is nearly identical with 20 : 16; see note there. Render, *Take his garment because he has become surety for a stranger, and hold him in pledge for a foreign woman, i. e., a harlot.* (See note on 2 : 16.) The thought is the same as in 20 : 16, except that here the danger from harlots is presented along with that from suretyship. **14a** describes one who is so over-zealous as to be evidently hypocritical. **B. To him**, the one who utters the blessing, on account of his hypocrisy. The verse shows the lack of value, and even the disadvantage, of outward form. **15** is similar in thought to 19 : 13b. **16a** means that the contentious woman, spoken of in the preceding verse, is as unrestrainable as the wind; **b**, that she is as elusive as oil. **17. Countenance** probably means here no more than person; a man has an influence on his

friend. **19**. This verse probably means that a man sees his reflection in others, like the reflection in water, *i. e.*, he observes his own qualities in others, he is quick to notice his own characteristics. **20a** is similar in thought to 30 : 15, 16. For meaning of **Abaddon**, see note on 15 : 11. **21a** is identical with 17 : 3a, but in a different connection; there God's testing is spoken of, here men's. **B. Is tried**, it is better to supply, *is known*. **Praise, i. e.**, reputation, the way men praise him. Silver and gold are tested that their real quality may be known; so man is known by his reputation. **22. Bruised corn**, better, *threshed grain*. **23. Flocks and herds** describe one of the most prominent forms of wealth. **24**. This verse gives a general reason for ver. 23, with no suggestion of contrast. It does not mean, as some have thought, that flocks are more permanent than any other kind of wealth, but that any kind of wealth is uncertain and must be looked after. **The crown**, better, *a crown*, an extreme case of the mutability of possessions. **25**. The real meaning is: When the hay, etc. ver. 26, Then, etc. **26**. This verse means that the lambs furnish clothing from their sale, and also from the wool which they furnish. **The field** should be *a field*; goats

27 And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.

27 And there will be goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household ;  
And maintenance for thy maidens.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 THE wicked flee when no man pursueth : but the righteous are bold as a lion.

2 For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof ; but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.

3 A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked : but such as keep the law contend with them.

5 Evil men understand not judgment : but they that seek the Lord understand all things.

6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son : but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

8 He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.

9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit : but the upright shall have good things in possession.

11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit ; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

1 THE wicked flee when no man pursueth : But the righteous are bold as a lion.

2 For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof :

But by men of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.

3 A needy man that oppresseth the poor Is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked : But such as keep the law contend with them.

5 Evil men understand not judgement : But they that seek the Lord understand all things.

6 Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, Than he that is perverse in his ways though he be rich.

7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son : But he that is a companion of gluttonous men shameth his father.

8 He that augmenteth his substance by usury and increase, Gathereth it for him that hath pity on the poor.

9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.

10 Whoso causeth the upright to go astray in an evil way, He shall fall himself into his own pit :

But the perfect shall inherit good.

11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit ; But the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

may be sold and a field purchased, if desired. 27b, render, *And for maintenance, etc.*

Chap. 28. 1a is similar in thought to Lev. 26 : 36, which has a national application. **Bold**, better, *confident, i. e., confident of safety.* 2a describes a time of general insecurity, which is indicated by frequent changes of kings, such as was often found in the northern kingdom, and sometimes in the southern. **The state thereof shall be prolonged**, render: *right shall be prolonged*, there shall come a long time of justice and security. 3. The rendering of R. V. makes this verse different from all the other Old Testament representations, in which the poor man never appears as an oppressor. Because of this fact, some change of text is almost universally adopted. The simplest and best involves no consonantal change, reading רָשָׁ, *rash*, or רָשָׁ, *rash*, for רָשָׁ, *rash*, and gives the rendering: *A ruler, instead of, A needy man. Leaveth, probably better, bringeth.* The comparison is with a violent tempest, which sweeps things away, but gives no help to the growing crops. Thus the activity of a ruler who oppresses the poor is entirely destructive, not at all beneficial. 4. **The law**, in both clauses render *teaching, i. e., of the wise, uttering the voice of God.* (See note on 1 : 8.) **Them, i. e., the wicked.** 5. **Judgement (justice)**, the rendering of the A.

R. V. is the better. **All things, i. e.,** with reference to justice, mentioned in a. 6. The verse is nearly identical with 19 : 1 ; see note there. 7. **The law**, as in ver. 4. 8. The verse is similar to 13 : 22b. **Usury (interest)**, the rendering of A. R. V. is the better. The thought is not of usury in the modern sense of the term, meaning an exorbitant rate of interest. This word means interest on money loaned, while the word rendered **increase** is especially interest on property loaned. The taking of any interest from Hebrews was forbidden. (See Lev. 25 : 35 f.) Violations of the law are recorded in Ezek. 22 : 12 ; Neh. 5 : 7, 10 f. In those times the taking of interest would have been oppression of the poor, for money and property were borrowed not in order to engage in business, as is so often the case now, but in order to relieve pressing necessity. 9. **The law**, as in ver. 4. **Abomination**, of course to God, to whom the prayer was directed. 10a, render: *He who misleads the upright into a dangerous way, i. e., into misfortune.* This is not leading them into sin, but into danger. This is better than the rendering of R. V., because it is in accordance with the general teaching of Proverbs that the wicked are trying to injure the upright, but not that they are able to lead them into sin. The thought is thus similar to that of 26 : 27. **Inherit**, bet-

12 When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

14 Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

15 As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

16 The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

17 A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.

18 Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.

19 He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.

20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

21 To have respect of persons is not good: for, for a piece of bread that man will transgress.

22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

23 He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.

25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.

26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

27 He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

12 When the righteous triumph, there is great glory:

But when the wicked rise, men hide themselves.

13 He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper:

But whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.

14 Happy is the man that feareth always:

But he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

15 As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over a poor people.

16 The prince that lacketh understanding is also a great oppressor:

But he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

17 A man that is laden with the blood of any person

Shall flee unto the pit; let no man stay him.

18 Whoso walketh uprightly shall be delivered:

But he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.

19 He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread:

But he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.

20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings:

But he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be unpunished.

21 To have respect of persons is not good:

Neither that a man should transgress for a piece of bread.

22 He that hath an evil eye hasteth after riches,

And knoweth not that want shall come upon him.

23 He that rebuketh a man shall afterward find more favour

Than he that flattereth with the tongue.

24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression;

The same is the companion of a destroyer.

25 He that is of a greedy spirit stirreth up strife:

But he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.

26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool:

But whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

27 He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack:

But he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

ter, possess. 12b is very similar to ver. 28a. (See also 29 : 16a.) Rise means, are in power.

Hide themselves, on account of the dangers that prevail. 13. The teaching is that of Ps.

32. 14. Feareth, the implied object must be God. B is similar to 29 : 1. Mischief, render,

calamity. 15. The poverty of the people makes his oppression and covetousness more burdensome. 16. Covetousness is too weak

a word; render, unjust gain. 17b, render: Flees unto a pit; let no man uphold him, i. e.,

give him help in his course. The thought is: a murderer will try to escape the consequences of

his crime, but in vain; when he flees, a pit awaits him. Therefore let no one give him aid

and encouragement in his course. There seems to be no definite reference in pit, it means

rather: if he escapes punishment in one form, it will meet him in another. 19a is identical

with 12 : 11a, and b is similar in both. 20. The verse is similar in thought to 20 : 21. 21a is

similar to 24 : 23b. (See also 18 : 5a.) B. Render:

And for a piece of bread a man may transgress, i. e., show partiality in judgment, as in a. This

is an extreme statement of the liability of judges to show partiality. 22. An evil eye, see 23 :

6, and the opposite in 22 : 9. Here it means especially an avaricious look. 23. At first a

rebuke is naturally unacceptable, but afterward it is appreciated. On b, see 29 : 5; on a, Ps.

141 : 5. 24. On a, see 19 : 26; and on b, 18 :

9b. This verse presumably refers to a son's getting possession of the property illegally, and

then justifying himself by saying that it would ultimately be his by inheritance. 25. He that

is of a greedy spirit, better simply, a greedy man. Stirreth up strife. The same Hebrew

phrase in 15 : 18 is rendered: stirreth up contention. B. (See 16 : 20b; 29 : 25b.) 26. Heart

means understanding. B. The parallelism appears in the implied idea that he who is wise does

not trust in himself alone. 27a is similar to 11 : 24a, 25; 14 : 21b; 19 : 17; 22 : 9. B. Hideth

his eyes, i. e., from the poor. Many a curse.



28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.

28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: But when they perish, the righteous increase.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

1 HE, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

3 Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.

4 The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.

5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.

6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

7 The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

8 Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.

9 If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.

10 The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but they just seek his soul.

11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

12 If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.

13 The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the Lord lighteneth both their eyes.

14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

1 HE that being often reproved hardeneth his neck

Shall suddenly be broken, and that without remedy.

2 When the righteous are increased, the people rejoice:

But when a wicked man beareth rule, the people sigh.

3 Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father:

But he that keepeth company with harlots wasteth his substance.

4 The king by judgement establisheth the land:

But he that exacteth gifts overthroweth it.

5 A man that flattereth his neighbour

Spreadeth a net for his steps.

6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare:

But the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

7 The righteous taketh knowledge of the cause of the poor:

The wicked hath not understanding to know it.

8 Scornful men set a city in a flame:

But wise men turn away wrath.

9 If a wise man hath a controversy with a foolish man,

Whether he be angry or laugh, there will be no rest.

10 The bloodthirsty hate him that is perfect:

And as for the upright, they seek his life.

11 A fool uttereth all his anger:

But a wise man keepeth it back and stilleth it.

12 If a ruler hearkeneth to falsehood,

All his servants are wicked.

13 The poor man and the oppressor meet together:

The Lord lighteneth the eyes of them both.

14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor,

His throne shall be established for ever.

See 11 : 26a, and the opposite in 28 : 20. 28a is very similar to ver. 12b. **B.** (See 29 : 2, 16 ; 11 : 10.) **Increase.** This is the common meaning of the word, and is sufficient here; when not oppressed they increase.

**Chap. 29. 1.** The verse is similar to 28 : 14b. **B.** This takes place by God's act, but it may be direct or indirect. **2.** The verse is similar to 28 : 12, 28. **Are increased,** here better, *are in power.* It seems necessary to give the word this meaning here, because it is a meaning easily derived from the usual one, and is demanded in this verse by the connection of thought and parallelism. The same meaning is to be assigned in ver. 16. **3a** is similar to many other passages in Proverbs. **B.** Licentiousness is here put as the opposite of wisdom, being one of the most conspicuous examples of folly. (So in 2 : 11, 16 ; 5 : 1-3 ; 6 : 23, 24 ; 9 : 1, 13.) **Wasteth his substance,** and so of course makes his father sad. **4. Gifts,** better, *taxes.* The reference is to a king who oppresses the people by excessive taxation. **5. For his steps, *i. e.,* of the neighbor. **6.** The verse is similar to 12 : 13. **A snare, *i. e.,* for himself. **Doth sing and rejoice,** not because of the misfortunes of****

the wicked, but because he is not himself in danger of snares. **7a,** the form of expression is similar to that of 12 : 10. **B.** Render: *The wicked does not understand knowledge,* a general statement, but having special reference to knowledge of the cause of the poor. **8. A flame, *i. e.,* of discord. **9. A controversy** is of a legal nature. **B.** The subject is the foolish man. Render: *He rages and he laughs, and there is no rest.* He refers to the foolish man. This means that he does not take the matter seriously, but does contradictory things, and will not listen to reason, so that whatever he does his opponent has no rest. **10b.** The rendering of R. V. is unnatural in syntax. The natural rendering is: *And the upright seek his life,* which of course cannot be right. It is best to change one consonant, reading  $\text{וְיִשְׁכַּח}$  = *y'bhäq'rá,* for  $\text{וְיִשְׁכַּח}$  = *y'bhäq'shü,* and render: *But the upright care for his life,* which gives a good meaning and a good antithesis. **11b.** Render: *But a wise man afterward stilleth it.* This means that he keeps silence till the fool has given utterance to his anger, and afterward brings forward convincing arguments refuting him. **13.** The general thought is the same as in 22 : 2. **Lighteneth the eyes.** Gives the light of life. **14.** (See 20 : 28 ; 25 : 5.)**

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom : but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth : but the righteous shall see their fall.

17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest ; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

18 Where there is no vision, the people perish : but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

19 A servant will not be corrected by words : for though he understand he will not answer.

20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words ? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

21 He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length.

22 An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

23 A man's pride shall bring him low : but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul : he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.

25 The fear of man bringeth a snare : but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

26 Many seek the ruler's favour ; but every man's judgment cometh from the Lord.

27 An unjust man is an abomination to the just ; and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom :

But a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother.

16 When the wicked are increased, transgression increaseth :

But the righteous shall look upon their fall.

17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest ;

Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

18 Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint :

But he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

19 A servant will not be corrected by words :

For though he understand he will not give heed.

20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words ?

There is more hope of a fool than of him.

21 He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child

Shall have him become a son at the last.

22 An angry man stirreth up strife,

And a wrathful man aboundeth in transgression.

23 A man's pride shall bring him low :

But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honour.

24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul :

He heareth the adjuration and uttereth nothing.

25 The fear of man bringeth a snare :

But whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

26 Many seek the ruler's favour :

But a man's judgement cometh from the Lord.

27 An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous :

And he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.

## CHAPTER XXX.

1 THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh, *even* the prophecy : the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal.

1 THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh ; the oracle.

The man saith unto Ithiel, unto Ithiel and Ucal :

**15. Child.** (See note on 20 : 11.) **Left to himself,** means left unpunished. For the thought,

see note on 19 : 18. **16a.** (See 28 : 12b, 28a ; 29 : 2b.) **B.** (See Ps. 37 : 34.) **Are increased,** render :

*are in power.* (See note on ver. 2.) **18. Vision,**

evidently of the prophets, the word often used of their teachings. It is used in reference to their oral activity ; there is here nothing to indicate that it means a body of their collected writings. These words were evidently written,

therefore, before prophecy had ceased in Israel. **Law.**

Some think this means the Mosaic law, the Pentateuch. But everywhere else in Proverbs the word means *teaching*, especially of the wise men, and no reason appears here for giving it a different meaning. It is better, therefore, to adopt that meaning here, and render *teaching*.

(See note on 1 : 8.) **Cast off restraint** means :

act as they please, do wickedly. **19.** The thought is evidently that words are insufficient, chastisement is necessary. **20b** is identical with 26 : 12, see note there. **21.** Render : *If one delicately brings up his servant from a child, there shall be grief at the last.* This seems to be the probable meaning, and involves no change of text. The meaning is : over-indulgence of a servant will end unfortunately. **22a** is nearly identical with 15 : 18a ; see also 28 : 25a. **24. Soul,** ren-

der, *self* ; he is opposed to all his own best interests. See 15 : 32, and the contrasted expression in 19 : 8a. **B** apparently refers to the custom stated in Lev. 5 : 1 ; Judg. 17 : 2, that a solemn curse was pronounced on any one who knew about a crime and did not reveal it ; this curse the partner of the thief hears but tells nothing. He has therefore a burden of guilt upon him, as stated in Lev. 5 : 1. **25. Snare** means danger of disaster, resulting of course from the fact that it leads into sin. **26.** See 19 : 6a ; on **b**, Isa. 49 : 4. This verse indicates that the only judgment that is sure to be just comes from Jehovah.

**Chap. 30.** This chapter forms a division by itself, and it is probable that the whole chapter is by one author ; see the Introduction. That author is stated to be **Agur the son of Jakeh.**

Neither name occurs elsewhere, so that the title conveys no real information. There is no reason, however, for considering the words to be common nouns, as some have done.

The first division of the chapter consists of ver. 1-6. Their subject may be stated as being : the author's search after God and its result. This division presents many difficulties and problems, as will be seen in the discussion. Ver. 1b-4 are regarded by many as the words of an opponent

2 Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.

3 I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is

2 Surely I am more brutish than any man,

And have not the understanding of a man:

3 And I have not learned wisdom,

Neither have I the knowledge of the Holy One.

4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended?

Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?

Who hath bound the waters in his garment?

Who hath established all the ends of the earth?

in argument, to which ver. 5, 6 are the reply. This is, however, only a supposition made to remove the difficulty caused by their apparently skeptical character, which difficulty can be better removed in another way. It is better to regard them as the words of Agur, relating a part of his experience.

In 1b the words unto Ithiel, unto Ithiel and Ucal are unmeaning. They should be rendered, with change of vowels but no change of consonants, reading לְאִתִּי אֶל לְאִתִּי אֶל וְאֶחָבֵל, *lā'ithi 'el lā'ithi 'el wā'ekhēl*: I have wearied myself about God, I have wearied myself about God, and have fainted. Then 2a should be rendered: For I am brutish, so as not to be a man. This rendering furnishes the key for the understanding of ver. 1b-4. It indicates that Agur had been engaged in an earnest but unavailing search after God. He is an honest seeker, and an unwilling skeptic. Ver. 1b-4 are an utterance of skepticism of this kind, they describe Agur's earnest and fruitless search after God.

Next should be examined the quotations and allusions of this passage, ver. 1b-6. These are numerous, and most, but not all, of them have hitherto been pointed out by others. Ver. 5 is a quotation with very slight changes from 2 Sam. 22: 31b and c, which is the same as Ps. 18: 30b and c, one of the most certainly Davidic psalms. Ver. 6 is an evident allusion to Dent. 4: 2 and 12: 32, containing some of their phraseology. Ver. 3 is a similar allusion to Prov. 9: 10, containing some of its phraseology. It is a regret by the author that he has not been privileged to share in the experience mentioned in 9: 10. Other less immediately obvious allusions may be recognized with the help of those already given. The man saith in ver. 1b is probably to be regarded as an allusion to the words of 2 Sam. 23: 1. These words are in Hebrew the same as the first part of the phrase: And the man who was raised on high saith. One of the words used, אָמַן, *n'um*, ordinarily belongs only to the prophetic vocabulary. Agur by using these words and omitting the rest of the phrase says in effect: I am merely a man, not a man raised on high, I cannot join in the triumphal utterance of David in his last words. The word in ver. 1a translated the oracle, אִמְרַתְּךָ, *hāmmāsā*, is also a

prophetic word, and can be naturally explained as used here in harmony with the word just mentioned, which is used as part of the quotation. Less obvious allusions are found in ver. 4, which, however, are probably to be regarded as such. Here are allusions to the same Davidic psalm from which ver. 5 is quoted. The first three clauses of ver. 4 are allusions to 2 Sam. 22: 10-12, which is the same as Ps. 18: 9-11. They contain in a brief form allusions in their order to the occurrences of these successive verses. The allusions here are skeptical, and are similar to those of ver. 1 and 3. The thought is: David has described God as doing these various things. I should like to know if he has, for I have not been able to find any such explicit manifestations of his power as are here related. So I ask who has done these things; it is of course God if any one.

Some, however, have interpreted ver. 4 as being written with man in mind, not God. For this view two chief reasons are assigned. One is that in ver. 4a ascended precedes descended, which could only be so, it is claimed, if some one on earth was in mind, who would first ascend. To this it is a sufficient answer to say that the order is the same when the angels are spoken of in Gen. 28: 12 and John 1: 51, which passages show that the order was not thought of as chronological. Another reason is that it is supposed to be necessary in order to account for the language of ver. 4e. This is not necessarily the case, however; see the later discussion on that part of the verse. It may be added that the acts of ver. 4 are all manifestly impossible for men, so that no good meaning is obtained on that view.

In ver. 4d no evident allusion is to be found. The phrase the ends of the earth is the same in Hebrew as that rendered the uttermost parts of the earth in Ps. 2: 8, but it is also found in several other passages.

The clause of greatest difficulty is ver. 4c. The difficulty here is chiefly in the use of the word son. Some of the views which have been held may be mentioned. Toy regards the verse as referring to man and explains e as follows: "To know a man's name and his son's name is to be well acquainted with him." He gives

his name, and what *is* his son's name, if thou canst tell?

5 Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me *them* not before I die:

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?

5 Every word of God is tried:

He is a shield unto them that trust in him.

6 Add thou not unto his words,  
Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

7 Two things have I asked of thee;

Deny me *them* not before I die:

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies:

Give me neither poverty nor riches;  
Feed me with the food that is needful for me:

also the following partial summary of other views: "On the supposition that the subject of the v. is 'God' the *son* has been understood as = Israel (*Midrash*), or the demiurge (Levi ben-Gerson), or Christ (Procop. *al.*), or as an adumbration of the Alexandrian doctrine of the Logos (Ew.), or of the NT. doctrine of the Son of God (Del.)."

The word **name** has various uses in the Old Testament; the most obvious is of course the ordinary use of the name as the designation of an individual. But often it means rather nature and character. The first phrase, **What is his name**, probably has the latter meaning, not what is God's name, but what is his nature, his character; I should like to know something about him; The second phrase, **And what is his son's name**, is probably used in the former meaning, it is a request to designate the individual who can be called the Son of God. What is meant by this? The meaning of the word *son* in relation to God in the Old Testament is well established. In the early history of Israel it was used as a designation of the nation Israel. Later the thought is narrowed to that of the Davidic king, so called as God's representative, standing in an especially intimate relation with him. The beginning of this usage is the promise made by God to David, recorded in 2 Sam. 7: 14. This promise is definitely alluded to in the words of Ps. 2: 7. As we are here dealing with the relatively later times, it is probable that the meaning is the later one, individual not national, the word being used here with 2 Sam. 7: 14, and perhaps also Ps. 2: 7, in mind. The question here would then mean, Who is the anointed Davidic king, who should be God's representative? This might have either one of two applications. It might be used when there was no Davidic king on the throne, and then the question would be, Where is the king who has been promised? This might be during or after the exile. Or it might be used when the Davidic king was conspicuously unworthy, and so this question would mean, How can he be God's representative, how

can he give me any of the information I seek concerning God? The term Son of God is manifestly incongruous as applied to him. This might be the case during the reign of Manasseh, or at any time after the death of Josiah, and before the exile. So far as this passage is concerned there is nothing to decide definitely between these two views. See further the notes on ver. 8, 9 and 11-14.

Thus far, then, we have Agur's desire for knowledge of God, a desire that is not gratified. It is a desire for some wondrous manifestation of God directly (ver. 4a-d), or a manifestation through his representative (ver. 4e). But he obtains no direct answer to these perplexed queries. He answers his own inquiries, however, by turning in another direction for help. He has been seeking in his own experience (ver. 3), and in observation (ver. 4), and has failed. Ver. 5 and 6 teach that God has manifested himself in his word, in the revelations previously made, and these are a sure dependence. The practical admonition follows, trust in that word, and do not seek to add to it by profitless speculation. Skepticism is thus only a stage in his experience.

**4. If thou knowest.** (See Job 38: 5.) **5. Tried**, means tested and found genuine. It is the word used of the purification of metal in a furnace, and of its testing. Other passages which may be quoted for comparison with certain parts of these verses (1-6) are the following. In general on **4**, Job 38; on **4a**, Gen. 11: 7; 35: 13; **b**, Amos 4: 13; Job 37: 9; Ps. 135: 7; **c**, Prov. 8: 27 f.; Job 26: 8; **d**, Isa. 45: 22; 52: 10; Ps. 67: 7; 98: 3; on **6b**, Job 13: 4, 10.

Ver. 7-33, except 10, 15, 17, 20, 32, 33, consist of proverbs containing groups of two or four things; see also note on ver. 15. For other examples of a similar use of numbers see Amos 1: 3 to 2: 8; Ps. 62: 11; Job 5: 19; 33: 14; 40: 5. The divisions and subjects will be indicated in the notes.

**7-9.** This is a prayer for deliverance from temptations, especially those which come from poverty and riches. **7. Have I asked**, render, *I ask*. **8. Needful**, probably better, *sufficient*.

9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

10 Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.

11 There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

13 There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.

14 There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

15 The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough:

16 The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.

17 The eye that mocketh at his father, and despis-

9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?

Or lest I be poor, and steal,  
And use profanely the name of my God.

10 Slander not a servant unto his master,  
Lest he curse thee, and thou be held guilty.

11 There is a generation that curseth their father,  
And doth not bless their mother.

12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes,  
And yet are not washed from their filthiness.

13 There is a generation, Oh how lofty are their eyes!  
And their eyelids are lifted up.

14 There is a generation whose teeth are as swords,  
and their jaw teeth as knives,  
To devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

15 The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give.

There are three things that are never satisfied,  
Yea, four that say not, Enough:

16 The grave; and the barren womb;  
The earth that is not satisfied with water;  
And the fire which saith not, Enough.

**9. Use profanely**, usually interpreted as meaning, blaspheme by murmuring against God. But it seems more natural to interpret it here as in the similar phrase in Ezek. 36:20, use profanely by unworthy actions, give others an unworthy impression of God, here by stealing. Ver. 8 and 9 seem to be written in a time when extremes of riches and poverty were common, which in both cases led to unfortunate results. This was true especially in the times shortly before the exile. **10b.** The curse, having good reason, would have a result. **Be held guilty**, and so suffer for it in some way not specifically stated. This verse stands by itself here in thought.

**11-14** contain a description of the wickedness and oppression of the time of the writer. **There is** is supplied at the beginning of each verse. In Hebrew the verses are really exclamatory, which adds to their force. The four verses describe respectively the unfilial men, the hypocrites, the proud, and the oppressors. **Generation** obviously refers to the writer's own generation. Of course this was not true of every individual, yet it must be understood as describing the general characteristics of his own time. It was, therefore, a time full of all kinds of wickedness and oppression. This sounds like the prophecies from the time of Amos to the exile, and suits the most of the later history of Judah, as well as Israel, although the latter is probably not to be specially considered. These verses, then, seem more appropriate to a period shortly before, than to one during or after the exile; see notes on ver. 1-6. **12b.** (See Isa. 4:4.) **13.** The verse is similar

to 6:17a. **14. From off the earth, from among men**, the acts are described as being so oppressive as to exterminate the poor.

**15, 16** describe five insatiable things. **15a** gives much trouble to commentators, who generally agree, in fact, that the text must be emended, either by omitting **a** as a later interpolation, or by adding a phrase giving the names of the daughters. The chief difficulties, however, are avoided by rendering **a** and **b**, Give (i.e., if you give) to the leech two daughters, there are three that are not satisfied. "Give" is repeated in the Hebrew; it may be regarded as scribal repetition, dittogram, or, more probably, as simply designed to add emphasis. The thought is, If you give to the leech two daughters of her own, instead of being satisfied with the offspring, as might be expected, the insatiability is simply trebled, because now there are three, all alike dissatisfied. The thought would be, in general, the leech is a type of some whom it is impossible to satisfy. **Daughters** is probably used, instead of children, simply because leech is feminine in Hebrew. Then the thought goes on to four other similar cases. **15c** should be added to **16**, and rendered, Four say not, Enough. The chief objection to the interpretation here given is that it breaks up the regularity of the form of statement: **three, four**, as found also in ver. 18, 21, and 29. But that objection has very little force, when it is observed that in this way is obtained a suitable meaning without change of text, and further that there is great variety in the use of numbers in such expressions, ver. 24 using *four* without the *three*.

eth to obey *his* mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:

19 The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.

20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

21 For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear:

22 For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

23 For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

24 There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:

25 The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;

26 The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;

27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;

28 The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

29 There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going:

30 A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any;

31 A greyhound; an he-goat also; and a king, against whom *there is* no rising up.

17 The eye that mocketh at his father, And despiseth to obey his mother, The ravens of the valley shall pick it out, And the young eagles shall eat it.

18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me,

Yea, four which I know not:

19 The way of an eagle in the air; The way of a serpent upon a rock; The way of a ship in the midst of the sea; And the way of a man with a maid.

20 So is the way of an adulterous woman; She eateth, and wipeth her mouth, And saith, I have done no wickedness.

21 For three things the earth doth tremble, And for four, which it cannot bear:

22 For a servant when he is king; And a fool when he is filled with meat;

23 For an odious woman when she is married; And an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

24 There be four things which are little upon the earth,

But they are exceeding wise:

25 The ants are a people not strong, Yet they provide their meat in the summer;

26 The conies are but a feeble folk, Yet make they their houses in the rocks;

27 The locusts have no king, Yet go they forth all of them by bands;

28 The lizard taketh hold with her hands, Yet is she in kings' palaces.

29 There be three things which are stately in their march,

Yea, four which are stately in going:

30 The lion, which is mightiest among beasts, And turneth not away for any;

31 The greyhound; the he-goat also; And the king, against whom there is no rising up.

17 states the punishment of the unfilial son. **Eagles**, render, *cultures*. The verse says that the unfilial son shall die and be left unburied for the birds of prey to feed upon.

18, 19 enumerate four wonderful things. The wonderful thing in each case is not that the act leaves no trace behind, as many have thought, but that in their very nature they are unusual, out of the ordinary course, contrary to the analogy of other things somewhat similar. Flying, especially for a large bird like an eagle, is wonderful, unlike the movements of other animals. So is the progress of a serpent without legs, even on a smooth rock. So also, to the Jewish conception, it was wonderful that a ship could go at all upon the sea, that mysterious object, so full of vague terrors to them. In the fourth case, there is no reason to think, with most commentators, of copulation; that could have been expressed more specifically. It is rather general, the thought of the mysterious attraction between a certain man and a certain woman.

20 describes the hypocrisy of the adulteress. The verse has no connection with the thought of ver. 19. The probability is that it is not by the author of the rest of the chapter, although it is not necessary to consider it a gloss. More

probably it is an isolated proverb, put into connection with the preceding verse by the last compiler on account of the mention of maid there, although the thought is entirely different. **So** does not refer to the preceding, but to **b** and **c** following; *thus* would express it better. On **b**, see 9: 17b.

21-23 give an account of four unendurable things. 21b, render, *And for four it cannot bear up*. 22a. (See 19: 10.) In each of the four cases mentioned in ver. 22, 23 there is a great change of fortune for the better, which naturally produces arrogance. 23. **Odious**, literally, *hated*, i. e., unattractive, one who was long unmarried. **Is heir to**, better, *dispossesses*, i. e., supplants.

24-28 describe four things which are small but wise. 25. (See 6: 8.) 26. **The conies**, render, *The rock badgers*; the technical term is the *Hyrax syriacus*, an animal about the size of a rabbit and having some resemblance to it. 28a, render, *The lizard thou canst seize with the hands*. This is mentioned to indicate the small size of the lizard and its harmlessness. In spite of these things, however, it goes everywhere, as stated in **b**.

29-31 describe four things which are stately. 31. **The greyhound** should probably be ren-

32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

33 Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, Or if thou hast thought evil, Lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

33 For the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, And the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: So the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

1 THE words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.

2 What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?

3 Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine: nor for princes strong drink:

5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

8 Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

1 THE words of king Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him.

2 What, my son? and what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows?

3 Give not thy strength unto women, Nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine:

Nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink?

5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, And pervert the judgement of any that is afflicted.

6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, And wine unto the bitter in soul:

7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, And remember his misery no more.

8 Open thy mouth for the dumb, In the cause of all such as are left desolate.

9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, And minister judgement to the poor and needy.

dered, *The war horse*. **B**, render, *and a king with whom an army rises up, i. e.*, for war, a king at the head of his army. This involves slight changes in the Hebrew text, reading  $\text{קָם לְנֶחֱם}$ , *hāyil qām*, for  $\text{קָם לְנֶחֱם}$ ,<sup>1</sup> but it is generally conceded that the Hebrew as it stands is untranslatable and some change is necessary.

32, 33 give advice against talkativeness. 32b, render, *Or if thou hast planned*. This is the only meaning in accordance with the usage of the Hebrew word. The thought of the verse is: if you occupy an exalted position either as the result of foolish conceit or of mature deliberation, in either case keep silence as the only safe way. 33. This verse is probably connected in a general way with the preceding, c giving the result of disregarding the advice of ver. 32, while a and b are illustrative comparisons.

Chap. 31. This chapter contains two divisions, ver. 1-9 and 10-31, of different authorship. See the Introduction. The first division consists of the title, ver. 1, and of advice to a king given by his mother. 1. The only natural rendering is: *The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him*. Massa is not certainly known as a country from the Old Testament. The word is found only in Gen. 25: 14 and 1 Chron. 1: 30, where it is the name of one of the sons of Ishmael. A country named from him would naturally be located in or near North Arabia. A country of this name and location is mentioned in the Assyrian inscrip-

tions. This is probably the country meant here. See also the Introduction. 2. **What** in all three cases implies something like: *shall I counsel thee?* **Son of my vows** means a son given in answer to vows, as in 1 Sam. 1: 11. The word **son**,  $\text{בָּר}$ , *bār*, used three times, is Aramaic. The word **kings** in ver. 3 has also the Aramaic form of the plural. 3. **That which destroyeth**, render, *Those who destroy*; it is really feminine and parallel to **women**. The verse is a warning against licentiousness. **Kings**. (See note on ver. 2.) 4. Render as an exhortation, *Let it not be for kings*, etc. **B**, render, *And let not strong drink be for princes*. This rendering involves a change of consonant, reading  $\text{אֵל}$ , *āl*, for  $\text{אֵל}$ , (*Q<sup>re</sup>*), suggested by Kamphausen following G., in a word almost certainly corrupt and changed in the *Q<sup>re</sup>*. This rendering has the advantage of making the form of expression uniform throughout the verse. 8. **Dumb** probably means not those physically dumb, who would be few, but those who through fear or other difficulties are not able properly to present their cases. **Left desolate** should probably be rendered *unfortunate*.

10-31 are an alphabetic poem, i. e., a poem in which the successive verses begin in Hebrew with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order. No strict analysis of this poem can be given. The alphabetic form of structure is not favorable to consecutive development of thought, as the alphabetic psalms also show. Yet there is a general order of thought, but not

<sup>1</sup> See "American Journal of Semitic Languages," Vol. XIX., p. 54.

10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

10 A virtuous woman who can find?

For her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband trusteth in her, And he shall have no lack of gain.

12 She doeth him good and not evil All the days of her life.

13 She seeketh wool and flax, And worketh willingly with her hands.

14 She is like the merchant-ships;

She bringeth her food from afar.

15 She riseth also while it is yet night,

And giveth meat to her household,

And their task to her maidens.

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it:

With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, And maketh strong her arms.

18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is profitable:

Her lamp goeth not out by night.

19 She layeth her hands to the distaff,

And her hands hold the spindle.

20 She spreadeth out her hand to the poor;

Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household;

For all her household are clothed with scarlet.

22 She maketh for herself carpets of tapestry;

Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

23 Her husband is known in the gates,

When he sitteth among the elders of the land.

24 She maketh linen garments and selleth them;

And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

25 Strength and dignity are her clothing;

And she laugheth at the time to come.

carried out consecutively. Ver. 10-12 consist of general praise of the worthy woman. Ver. 13-15 tell of her activity in connection with domestic affairs, which is also the thought of ver. 19, 21, 22, and 27. Ver. 16-18 speak of her financial activity in a more general way, and this is also the thought of ver. 24. Ver. 20 tells of her benevolence to the poor. Ver. 23 speaks of the distinction she confers on her husband. Ver. 25 speaks in general of her prosperity. Ver. 26 tells of her wisdom. Ver. 28, 29 describe the recognition of her merits by her family. Ver. 30, 31 are a summing up by the poet in general praise of such a woman.

**10. A virtuous (worthy) woman.** The rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. The same phrase is found in 12: 4a. **Who can find**, here evidently means: she is rare. The same phrase is found in 20: 6b. **Price** is the literal rendering; the real meaning is *worth*. **Rubies**, render, *corals*, and see note on 3: 15. **12. Good and not evil** means benefit and not injury. **15. Task** is, literally, *portion*. This may be either of food or of work. Many take it here in the former meaning, but the latter is preferable because food is included in the statement of **b**, inasmuch as servants are regularly included in **household**. **18b**. It is stated to be the custom of the Palestinian Bedouins at the present time to burn a light all night except in times of great adversity, when they cannot afford to buy oil. Hence this clause

is thought by some to mean: she is in a prosperous condition, with allusion to that practice. But this is an improbable view. There is no evidence that the custom mentioned was ancient. It would in any case be inappropriate here, for the meaning then would only be: she is not in extreme destitution, which would be too weak. Hence it is better to regard the clause as another statement of her industry, describing her work as lasting long in the night. **21. Snow** is not used as synonymous with winter in general; that would rather be *rain* in the common usage. It is rather the coldest part of winter. In the higher regions of Palestine, certainly about Jerusalem, there are several days of snow every winter, but seldom enough to remain more than a day at a time. **Scarlet**. Some have thought it strange that there should be here no mention of the warmth of the garments. But scarlet garments were always of wool, so that is implied, as it is in the similar word used here in G. **22. Carpets of tapestry**, render simply, *coverings*, as in the case of the same word in 7: 16. It probably means especially bed coverings. **23. Known** implies also the idea, *respected, honored*. **Among** means *as one of*. The meaning is not simply that he was accustomed to sit in the gates, but that he was one of the ruling body, the elders. **24. Delivereth** means in trade, *i. e.*, she sells. **25. Strength and dignity** refer not to bodily strength but to financial prosperity. **B** means



26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom;

And the law of kindness is on her tongue.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28 Her children rise up, and call her blessed:

Her husband *also*, and he praiseth her, *saying*:

29 Many daughters have done virtuously,

But thou excellest them all.

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain:

But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands;

And let her works praise her in the gates.

that her circumstances are so prosperous that she has no fear for the future. **26. The law of kindness**, render, *Kindly teaching*. **28. Rise up**, as a preliminary to speech. The thought is most naturally of their utterances in the gates. **29. Daughters** here and in several other passages is equivalent to *women*, but it is apparently used as a more complimentary term. **Virtuously** (*worthily*); the rendering of the

A. R. V. is the better. **30. Favour** (*grace*); the rendering of the A. R. V. is the better. The meaning of the verse is that grace and beauty are externals and transient, but fear of Jehovah is internal and permanent. **31. Fruit of her hands** is a general phrase, including naturally prosperity, enjoyment, and praise. The last thought is made the specific one in **b**.



# THE SONG OF SONGS

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## INTRODUCTION

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THE book which bears the title "The Song of Songs which is unto Solomon," stands first in the group of Hebrew writings called the Megilloth, or Rolls, the group containing the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther. This group is included in the third great division of the Old Testament, the Hagiographa, or The Writings. The Song of Songs also falls within the class of the Chokma, or Wisdom Literature, that form of writing in which the Hebrews sought the solution of moral and ethical problems. Of these it is the most poetic and the most dramatic in form. The Proverbs excelled all other books of the Wisdom Literature in the wide range of their moral vision and in their epigrammatic treatment of the issues considered. Job excelled in the statement of a difficulty experienced by all mankind, and in the sustained vindication of the Deity in his ways with men. Some of the Psalms excelled in their quick flights toward the source of light, and in their inspired faith and religious feeling. The Song of Songs excelled in its selection of a common human theme, lying close to every human heart, and in the lyric and dramatic force draped in the fairest imagery, with which it reaches its ethical goal. The whole group of the Chokma is peculiar in not dealing with events or laws or customs as such. It is given to matters of character, either of the individual or society. Its purpose is instruction and inspiration, the production of right thought and life. The Song of Songs, rightly considered, is of this character, though it often has been so greatly misjudged as to seem immoral and degrading. It will be found to teach a lesson that may well commend it to every devout mind.

### AUTHOR, TITLE, AND DATE.

The title, like most of those of the psalms and many of the books of the Old Testament, is open to question. In this case a singular verbal peculiarity at once attracts the attention. "The Song of Songs which is unto Solomon," is the exact English transcript of the Hebrew words. The pronoun "which" is written in full in this title; but in the book itself it nowhere appears in its full form, but is always indicated only by the initial letter of the Hebrew word. Would the author of the book have departed from his usual custom if he had written the title to the Song?

Moreover, the contents of the book make it extremely improbable that a royal lover like Solomon would thus record his unsuccessful wooing, and, more than that, depict scenes and lay down principles distinctly hostile to his own manner of life and to the customs of the day sanctioned by royal regulations. Unless the general scope of the book is misconceived by the large majority of interpreters such would be the case if Solomon wrote it. Only one view of the contents could justify a Solomonic authorship—that by which Solomon and the lover to whom the heroine remains true are one and the same person, the king masquerading from time to time as a shepherd; for the work might then be regarded as a clever romance in

which the lover gains his purpose, and, if he were the author, would not hesitate to set forth his success in the most alluring manner, that success being due to his personal attractions rather than to his royal station. But such an interpretation justly seems to most scholars to be violent; and if the author had any ethical aim at all, this interpretation would frustrate all such aim, for it would present Solomon as seeking only to add one more wife to his harem with no opposition on the part of the maiden, and it would record his success. That would be the limit of meaning to be ascribed to the book, a limit that can hardly be imagined.

But if we suppose that some poet, quite in accord with literary custom, seized upon the person and history of Solomon as giving special force and point to his poem, introducing him as a character, while he shows the peculiar evils of his reign and lifts into the pure air and sunlight a virtue that had become hidden and fouled beneath the institutions to which royalty had given its sanction and example, we find a natural explanation of the book. And then, if at a later time some editor wrote at the beginning of it a title, ascribing it to the monarch whose name appears in it so frequently, a monarch who had been famed for his literary skill and the multitude of his productions, we have only to assume that the editor was no worse than a multitude of learned interpreters have been, in failing to grasp the real force of the poem, which is against the ascription to Solomon.

As for the meaning of the Hebrew title itself we see no reason for giving it an intention not forced upon other titles of the same verbal structure. We need not see in it a "Song of Songs ascribed to Solomon," or "pertaining to Solomon," with no reference to authorship. It is the usual form for ascription of authorship: The Song of Songs composed by Solomon. The difficulties and the probabilities are equally met if we assign its writing to a later hand. But while we do this the appropriateness of the title itself, the Song of Songs, cannot be questioned. For length, for artistic structure, for beauty of diction, for loftiness of purpose, few songs of the Hebrew literature could surpass it, and in some of these respects none equaled it. It is not merely *one* of the many songs of Solomon, as some interpreters would assert. Not even the unknown and somewhat obtuse writer of the title would descend to such weakness as that. It is *the song* of songs, the pre-eminent song, the most beautiful and excellent of all songs.

If Solomon did not compose the poem, who did? It is a question that can be answered only with conjecture. Many indications would show that it was probably written by some poet who lived in the time of Solomon, or, far more likely, a little later. There is a reference to Tirzah as a beautiful and well-known place; but Tirzah had no particular prominence during Solomon's reign nor at a very long time after it closed. The first monarch of the northern kingdom made it a place of residence, and practically it was the capital of the kingdom under the monarchs who followed Jeroboam. It probably retained some of its prestige after the court was removed from it to the city of Samaria. In northern Israel it was famed for its beautiful situation, but a writer much later than its time of importance would hardly be likely to couple its name with that of Jerusalem when speaking of places famed for beauty or strength. Whoever wrote the poem was closely familiar with Solomon's kingdom and with the details of scenery and customs in Palestine. An author of late date and foreign origin, as some commentators suppose, would hardly

have been so familiar with the scenes and objects of the period of Solomon as this writer was. Nor do the foreign words and the names of productions from foreign lands, like myrrh and incense, indicate that the author lived at a time when Aramaic and Greek and Persian influence had corrupted the language, introduced foreign luxury, and debased the customs. Such foreign productions were exceedingly common in Palestine in the early monarchy, as we know from the story of the commerce of the land, the most distant countries sending their riches by sea, or by the ships of the desert, to enhance the glory of the kingdom. And while Graetz makes a strong argument for the late date of the Song from the Aramaisms and from a few words apparently of Persian and Greek origin, Driver affirms that these peculiarities are no more than were to be expected upon the northern frontiers and in provinces having constant dealings with foreign peoples. It was the beginning of the "Galilean dialect," that became so marked a feature of the north at a later time. Graetz's long argument from the Greek luxury evidently contributing to the circumstantial richness of the poem may be dismissed as of little weight, since "marble pillars" and "tapestries" for the throne and palanquin are as purely Oriental as Occidental in their origin and use, and at the time of Solomon they were common accessories of his royal state. We see no reason for the narrow limits of possibility assigned by Graetz for the composition of the poem, B. C. 230-218. With quite as much probability its author may have lived in the early years of the northern kingdom, a time, as Ewald points out, especially inviting for the criticism of Solomon and the ethics of his court by a poet who wrote for Israel while the hostilities of the disruption were fresh. It may be concluded that while no certain date and no definite author can be named, the poem had its origin in the imagination of some poet of northern Israel at a time not long subsequent to the division of the kingdom.

#### THE PURPOSE AND CANONICITY OF THE POEM.

Two points of view are to be considered: First, what was the purpose of the author in composing the Song? Second, a question quite as important for the determination of its character as sacred Scripture, What was considered its aim and scope at the time of its admission to the canon?

It is with reference to these questions that Mr. Adeny, in the Expositor's Bible, says: "The Song of Solomon is a puzzle to the commentator." Delitzsch begins by the assertion, "The Song is the most obscure book of the Old Testament." Another writer declares it to be "The enigma of the Old Testament." Farrar shows the difficulty by giving a hasty glance at some of the explanations that have been offered: "It represents the love of God for the congregation of Israel; it relates the history of the Jews from the Exodus to the Messiah; it is a consolation to afflicted Israel; it is an occult history; it represents the union of the divine soul with the earthly body, or of the material with the active intellect; it is the conversation of Solomon and Wisdom; it describes the love of Christ for his church; it is historico-prophetic; it is Solomon's thanksgiving for a happy reign; it is a love song unworthy a place in the canon; it treats of man's reconciliation to God; it is a prophecy of the church from the crucifixion till after the Reformation; it is the seven days' epithalamium on the marriage of Solomon with

the daughter of Pharaoh ; it is a magazine for direction and consolation under every condition ; it treats in hieroglyphic of the sepulchre of the Saviour, his death, and the Old Testament saints ; it refers to Hezekiah and the Ten Tribes ; it is written in glorification of the Virgin Mary."

1. It must be said that the Song itself contains no hint of any particular religious tendency. There are no references to worship. There are no teachings of a particularly spiritual character. On the surface the poem appears to be merely a poem of human love, pure and unconquerable. The author certainly betrayed no conscious effort to depict by allegory or type any truth whatever. It was only for a much later time and for men already strongly prejudiced toward such methods of interpretation to see such hidden meanings in the text. The slight hints of an allegorical sense found in the translation of certain words by the Septuagint cannot be urged to prove that two centuries before Christ the book was regarded as allegorical. The author wrote a poem depicting the beauty of a pure and steadfast human love. But the author, as clearly, intended to teach with emphasis the great wrong of all illicit love, and the danger of attempting to force the natural affections prematurely. The single refrain of the Song in its three-fold repetition is like the moral of a fable. Our Authorized version gives no idea of its force, making it a simple, somewhat inane, request that the lover shall not be aroused from sleep until he is ready ! But the true translation, the spirit of which is accurately caught by the Revised version, makes the refrain of strong and beautiful import :

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
By the roes and by the hinds of the field,  
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,  
Until it please.

Such love as this is the theme of the Song, a love as natural in its spontaneity and as true in its expression as that which the wild creatures of the forests and mountains show, subject to none of the artificialities of human conventions, free from the excesses and intrigues of courts, simple and true as God meant it to be ;

strong as death,  
Many waters cannot quench love,  
Neither can the floods drown it :  
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,  
He would utterly be contemned.

This is the author's theme. He sets it forth with wonderful skill. He depicts the faithfulness of a pledged love amid all the blandishments of Solomon's harem. With a boldness unexampled he imagines a village maiden of marvelous beauty who dares to repulse the king. The monarch who has sought through all his realms and at foreign courts for beauties to fill his palace, the monarch whose mere desire was law, whose smile was a command, whose favor was an honor supreme, is withstood by this faithful girl, who has pledged her heart to a shepherd ! Apparently Solomon accepts the gage of battle, amused at its novelty, allowing himself even to fail in the end, as the tearful beauty of this girl, the only one who had ever shrunk from the royal alliance, wrought upon his pity and aroused somewhat of the wisdom that was always a mark of his character and of which he had written



so much. It is a bold conception of the poet ; none bolder ever won the effort of a writer or charmed the reader by its suspense. But the extremity, the very extravagance of the case, set forth most perfectly the ethical lesson, and as never before, perhaps never since, the value and the moral height of a steadfast love and of sexual purity were displayed. For our times this lesson justifies the book as of high ethical, if not religious, value. Christ taught that personal and social purity are essential fruits of his Spirit and word. Nor are our times so different from those of the poem that its lesson is not needed. The vices of Paris and London and New York are similar to those of Jerusalem and Samaria in the times of Solomon or Ahab. And even in the common walks of life and in social spheres that are free from the temptations of luxury and effeminaey, how large a proportion of the misery would disappear if the love between men and women were as pure and faithful as that between the Shulamite and her shepherd !

2. But the Jews were not content with this purpose of the author, and they did not cease to question the right of the book to a place in their list of sacred books until an allegorical drapery was put over its meaning, to clothe the otherwise offensive sensualism of the text. Even then the rabbis advised that it should not be read by persons under the age of thirty. Nor can we wonder greatly at their hesitation. No such book to-day would win a vote in any ecclesiastical assembly unless it were plainly indicated that a divine inspiration lay at its source. And so it was believed to cover a reference to the religious history of the nation. The maiden was made to signify the chosen Israel ; God was her espoused ; Solomon and his wicked court were the blandishments of the world, the temptations whereby Israel so often was tempted, and in actual experience had fallen. But the ideal Israel was the faithful Israel, beloved and chaste. Occasionally the thought wavered, as in the Peshitto the title is translated to mean the Wisdom of Wisdoms, and in the Septuagint Wisdom is the heroine of the poem. Instantly from these interpretations difficulties arise that seem insurmountable, and in the allegorical method the student was thrown back upon the application to Israel, though this really was absurdly inadequate. At last the strife over the right of the book to a place in the canon was settled somewhat summarily in A. D. 90. In this year, at Jamnia, the claims of the two books, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, were formally discussed, and the last stage in controversies over the Jewish canon was reached. The school of Hillel, which sought to find a text of Scripture for every tradition, and, with more liberality than was shown by the school of Shammai, judged leniently departures from the Law, and desired to extend as much as possible the scope and volume of the sacred writings. Rabbi Akiba of this school was particularly earnest to secure the establishment of these two books as authoritative. He had himself declared, for he was "of very rigid mind," that "those who read the outside books have no part in the life to come." Such books by a special rule were without the protection of sanctity. The manuscripts that were too holy to be used for common purposes were said "to defile the hands" of those who used them—a strange contradiction, but not alone in rabbinical tradition. Did the Song of Songs defile the hands? One passage (Jadajim 3 : 5) says : "All holy scriptures, even the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes, defile the hands." Rabbi Judah says : "The Song of Solomon defiles the hands, but Ecclesiastes is

doubtful." Rabbi Joses says: "Ecclesiastes does not defile the hands, but the Song of Solomon is doubtful." Rabbi Simon says: "Ecclesiastes is among the points on which the school of Shammai decides in a manner to aggravate difficulty." Rabbi Simon ben Asai says: "I have received it as the tradition of the seventy-two elders that on the day that Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah was named president, it was decided that the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes defile the hands." In general the school of Shammai said: "Ecclesiastes does not defile the hands," while the school of Hillel held to the sacredness of that book. Rabbi Akiba silenced debate with the words: "No one in Israel has ever doubted that the Song of Songs defiles the hands. For no day in the history of the world is worth the day when the Song of Songs was given to Israel. For all the Hagiographa are holy, but the Song of Solomon is a holy of the holies. If there has been any dispute it referred only to Ecclesiastes." Akiba was a violent partisan, and it has been well suggested that partisans are likely to speak loudest where their positions are weakest. In this case every one knew that the doubt had been great and the dispute long over this book, but Akiba was of great authority and thus the debate was closed. It only remains to be said that the early Christian interpreters had no hesitation in following the leading of the Jewish interpreters, with such differences as the case demanded. Origen adapted the Song to Christian allegory. The long succession of interpreters cannot be traced fully in this place, but the titles and synopses of our Authorized version sufficiently indicate the results of their work in fixing the allegorical references for the English reader. If we are to choose the true way we must go back to the author's thought and the simple meaning of the poem, as we have indicated.

But before leaving this portion of our subject, it will be well to take up one or two of the more important allegorical references of the poem, that we may see somewhat in detail what they involve, and how impossible it is to hold to them in any reasonable interpretation. Suppose that Solomon in the poem is understood to be the type of Christ and the beautiful Shulamite the type of the church, for this is the conception with which the mystics are best satisfied. Now, whatever Solomon may have been as the type of Christ from his being the son of David and the ruler of Israel, his relations to his harem and to the lascivious customs that his introduction of idolatry brought into his court are far away from anything that could be found in the nature of Christianity. In his youth Solomon was an ideal monarch. But in his age he was one of the greatest of voluptuaries. And his success in winning this maiden of the poem, which this interpretation requires, is only the addition of one more favorite to the number of those already within his palace. Where is the spiritual or moral lesson in this, and where can any parallelism be found between it and the relations of Christ and his bride as they are portrayed in the New Testament? How can it be that a poem that introduces a royal voluptuary as its hero, that makes the addition of another wife to the seven hundred or more already in his harem the main theme, that paints the excesses of his court, the intrigues and jealousies of his palace, and sets forth graphically the feelings of the lovers toward each other in such surroundings—how can it be that such a poem portrays the relations of Christ to his church, or of Christ to the individual soul? It is not adequate to answer that Solomon is represented as

loving the Shulamite more than any other, and that she is the one pearl, the lily among thorns, chosen above all the women of Jerusalem as his bride, for the church has no rivals, however inferior, in the affections of her Lord. Nor can we resort to the explanation that Solomon was converted from his evil ways by the pure love of the peasant maiden, for this only complicates the reference and the comparison with Christian conditions becomes unthinkable. On the other hand, if Solomon be regarded not as the hero of the poem, and the shepherd lover represent the Bridegroom either of the ancient Israel or the Christian church, and if Solomon and the blandishments of his court represent the snares of the world, from which the chaste soul flees, then it is difficult to see how the Shulamite, given over to the power of the monarch and court that are typical of the world, can represent the church or the Christian, for she is wholly beyond the aid of her lover whom she sees only in her dreams, and he never comes to her for her comfort or release; her final escape is only by the good grace of Solomon himself, a case hardly comparable with the deliverance of the Christian from the snares of the world through the power of his Lord. One must strain the poem a great deal to make it fit such a theory.

Moreover, by any such allegorical or typical theory, how strange becomes the fact that the writers of the New Testament make no use of this book in teaching spiritual truth. Not a word is to be found in the New Testament applying this Song or any part of it to the relations between Christ and his church, although similar figures are used. If Origen was right in the ten volumes that he devoted to an allegorical interpretation of the Song; if Bernard of Clairvaux was right in pouring out the rapture of his soul upon the eighty-six homilies of spiritual exposition, which after all brought him at the time of his death only to the end of the second chapter of the poem; what an inexplicable omission it was on the part of Paul and John not to make use of such a mine of wealth for the explanation of the relations of the believer with the Lover of his soul. It is surely the greatest of the wonders of the Bible, that a book so marked in its religious force, so apt in the parallelism of its language with the natural expressions of ecstatic devotion, should have remained without a word of quotation or appeal from the great teachers of Christian thought and experience. While such a negative argument would prove nothing if the *prima facie* evidence of the poem itself were in favor of a mystical interpretation, it proves much in view of the admitted fact that the literal reading is entirely without hint of mystical force. The burden of proof lies with him who asserts the spiritual interpretation.

But it may be asked whether the rejection of the allegorical and typical methods of interpretation involves the entire disuse of the Song for spiritual purposes. Must it be regarded simply as a pleasant bit of literature, with a high moral import, and may it never be used, as so many devout souls have loved to use it, to indicate their relations with Jesus and their aspirations for eternal and perfect happiness with him? The answer is to be found in the actual use of such relations as those depicted in the poem by the writers of the Bible, and by many who have seen in it *illustrations* of spiritual relations just as they have also drawn such illustrations from historic events, like the crossing of Jordan, the gift of manna, the smitten rock, etc. Turn to the many biblical passages wherein the

true or false love of man and woman is used, not allegorically, not typically, but by way of illustrating the relations between the soul and its God. Then we shall see how, even though the writer of the Song had no such thought as his prime motive, the figures of the poem may suggest to the discerning mind spiritual comparisons. See how Israel is warned against forsaking for apparent gain the everlasting love of Jehovah (Exod. 34 : 15 ; Deut. 31 : 16 ; Jer. 3 : 9, etc.). Note how God calls Israel by the tenderest names, bride and wife (Isa. 54 : 5 ; 62 : 4, 5 ; Hos. 2 : 14-23). Recall the New Testament figures, the church as the bride of Christ in a "mystical union" (Eph. 5 : 24-32 ; Rev. 21 : 2, 9 ; 22 : 17). We shall hardly be in error, then, if we allow such a passage in the Song as, "My beloved is the chief among ten thousand," to suggest to us the parallel that Christ, the beloved of the soul, is beyond compare, "altogether lovely." Or if we read: "His banner over me is love," the words may indeed illustrate to us the ruling and protecting power of the Lord, whose love ever surrounds the people of his choice. We may see in her, who "looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners," an illustration of the invincible church, whom the Lord loves with his whole heart. But all this is the farthest from viewing the poem as intending to teach such thoughts, hiding them under the form of allegory, or suggesting them by types. And it must not be forgotten that the mood of the poem is not of this sort, and that we generally shall do better to win from its words only the natural, simple, and healthful lesson of the beauty, the rightfulness of a pure human affection, a love that was as truly instituted by God as any law of our being, and that is as sacred as any religious emotion.

#### THE POETIC FORM.

The attempts to place the Song in one or another class of poetic composition according to modern terminology have been many and varied. Pure drama, with definite divisions into acts and scenes, even with probable presentation upon the stage, has been one claim. Other scholars have seen only a collection of love songs strung together upon the slenderest dramatic thread and having no real connection with each other. Herder, De Wette, Magnus, Bleek, and latest of all, Conder, take this view. Conder finds a remarkable similarity between the different parts of the poem and Arab love songs of the present time. Some see history depicted, and to some it is clearly an epic. Delitzsch regards it as a drama in very exact form, with six acts and two scenes to each act. Ewald holds the same opinion as to its form with difference as to the divisions and speakers. Renan makes the dramatic form emphatic. Graetz goes so far as to ridicule the dramatic hypothesis, and declares that there is only one speaker, Shulamith, with possibly the exception of a few lines uttered by a chorus, an opinion, it seems to us, impossible to hold. W. R. Griffis, whose excellent book "The Lily Among Thorns," is within the reach of all English readers, pronounces the dramatic structure to be very evident, and he commits what seems to us to be the common fault of making the analysis too elaborate, sometimes disregarding entirely the natural force of the Hebrew parallelism. Moulton calls the work a "lyric idyl," a suite of seven idyls. So the opinions vary. Nor is it strange that attempts to classify an ancient production, an outgrowth of times whose literary forms were wholly different from

those now prevailing, should find no single term under which the book can be placed without hesitation. The difficulty is enhanced by the entire absence of any directions or rubrics in the work itself. Ecclesiastes declares itself to be the utterance of one man. The book of Job has its own clearly marked dialogue. The Song leaves all divisions to be seen only from changes of number, gender, or the variation of figures and the tenor of the speech. Thus indefinite, the matter is left to the insight and acumen of each reader, and variety of opinion is inevitable. To us, while the lyrical character of much of the poem is evident, its dramatic structure is no less plain. According to the strict definitions of drama as "pure presentation," having a certain mechanical structure, with designated places for the scenes, with entrances and exits defined, with characters never confused with one another and dialogue always proceeding toward one anticipated end, definitions of which some might well be questioned, the poem is not a pure drama. But it is dramatic. At least three different characters speak with each other. The theme is one, and the action proceeds with no retrogressions, if rightly considered. The action is lively, the interest is sustained through all variety of scene and every form of speech. Yet we feel that the poem never could be acted in its present form, and we know that at any time, early or late, in Jewish history the genius of the people was averse to any such productions as those that delighted Greece and amused Rome. Can more be said than that the Song of Songs is dramatic—that it has many features of the drama without its full and perfect form?

#### THE CONTENTS AND OUTLINE.

We discern three characters who take part in the speech of the poem. The heroine is a maiden called by the name of her native town, Shulamith, or, more exactly, *the Shulamith*, from Shulem or Shunem, the village upon the slope of the "Little Hermon," opposite Jezreel toward the north. Here (2 Kings 4 : 8) was the dwelling-place of the "great woman" who rendered to Elisha her hospitality with such exceeding reward, and here Abishag, fairest of her time, was born. From the slopes above the town through an opening in the hills Nazareth glinted like a star of promise. Below lay the historic plain of Esdraelon. On the western horizon Carmel raised its brow to the sky and bathed its feet in the sea, while in the east Mount Tabor beckoned the way toward the Jordan. The mountains of Gilboa rose toward the south. Luxuriant gardens and groves of fruit and olive trees lay around. Abundant waters crossed the plain, like the brook Kishon, and fell away westward to the Great Sea and eastward to the Jordan, beyond which loomed the purple hills across the Ghor. What girl born here could ever forget her early home, however the luxurious surroundings of a court might afterward pamper her life? And if she left here a lover to whom she was already pledged, how could she fail to be homesick and despairing even with a monarch at her side? This is the conception of the poet. His heroine is a Shulamite. Her heart is in this sweet homeland. Her ear is deaf to the king's appeals.

Solomon is also a character in the poem. He has found this girl in the north, or she has been brought to him as Abishag, another Shulamite of great beauty, was brought to David by the minions of the palace, who were always on the search for the supply of the harem. But something about this girl has awakened in the

king's breast a sentiment of pity. She is no simpering fool, glad to be set among the scenes of luxury, honored by sharing with hundreds of others the king's desires. Nor is she the shrinking, trembling slave who cowers at the feet of her master, too ready to do his will. She brings a surprise into the harem as fresh and breezy as her northern hills. It is a new experience for Solomon. She retains the free spirit of her life as a shepherdess. She defends her cause as a keeper of a vineyard would fight back marauders. Her virtue is like a vineyard tower, and her love is like "a wall with turrets of defense upon it." Mere force is not for this girl. She must be won, and the royal suitor, tired out by meaner loves, sets himself to the task. Everything seems to be in his favor. She is already in his palace; his magnificence is all around her; she seems beyond the reach of help; but the royal voluptuary finds that he cannot easily succeed; his interest grows with her opposition; at last he realizes that there will be but one greater thing than to possess such a woman as this; that will be to give her up, to let himself rise to the royal gift that such a woman deserves, and to bestow it on her—an unheard-of thing—with his own free hand. It is a splendid contest waged by these two; the poet could see no end but victory for the maiden and her love.

Certain women are addressed as "the daughters of Jerusalem." They are the older inhabitants of the harem. They have been accustomed to all the blandishments of art and all the fluctuations of desire and hatred that make up life in the Oriental harem. They find great sport from this rustic Shulamite. She is beautiful, but they admit it at first only with mockeries. They shower their scorn upon the warmth of this girl's heart. "What is her lover better than any lover?" They draw from her for their amusement a description of the shepherd. But with all their cruel sport they cannot fail to see the maiden's real beauty, both physical and moral, and gradually it works some change in their feelings. But they never yield her the sincere admiration that many interpreters find in their words. Here the poet is very skillful, too subtle, it would seem, for many scholars. The women praise Shulamith, but we note that it is only when Solomon is present. They are too crafty not to humor the king's moods. When he is present his favorite is treated in a fashion quite different from that which gives her pain in his absence. The king himself is deceived, for he says: "Why, even the women praise her!" a thing most remarkable amid the jealousies and hatreds of the harem. Often there is a double meaning in the words of the women, innuendo, that the enamored king does not see. They declare that a king may well be ensnared by such beauty. They ask her to sing for them, and as she turns quickly away, they cry out: "Return, return," or, possibly, "Turn again, turn again," and they are ready to take up the suggestion afforded by one of her own innocent sayings, and to call upon her to dance for them the celebrated dance of Mahanaim, and with every indecent reference they sing her bodily charms, like those of a common public dancer, from her browned feet, "beautiful when in shoes," to her wavy locks in which the monarch is ensnared. It is not necessary to suppose that Shulamith actually danced before them; such a dance would have been entirely contrary to her character as depicted in the poem. This is the climax of the poem. When their extravagant descriptions of her physical beauty have inflamed the king to the utmost, as they were intended to do, so that this superior being might be reduced to the level of

the women around her, then the king breaks out with his passionate declaration : "I will climb up into this palm tree, I will take possession of its fruit!" They have had their last word, and Shulamith will listen no more. We may everywhere see the same light-minded, intrigue-loving, jealous, and fickle character in the lines spoken by the women of the harem, the "daughters of Jerusalem." And it is with special point and in marked contrast with their own foolish thoughts that the Shulamite in each case turned upon them with the words :

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
That ye stir not up nor awaken love  
Until it please.

We find no other characters speaking in the poem. The lover, to whom the maiden clings, appears only in her visions of him, or is heard only as she quotes his well-remembered words. The one law of simplicity demands that the action and the persons of the poem shall be free from unnecessary complications. The explanation of the song is not possible without the maiden, the king, and the "daughters of Jerusalem," but with these we have enough to make clear all the variations in the text.

How is it known when each of these characters takes up the speech? In the total absence of all marginal directions a degree of uncertainty must remain in a few cases. But in most cases the matter is plain enough. The masculine or feminine termination of a pronoun will sometimes determine the person addressed, and thus show also who it is who is speaking. The almost invariable use of certain words by particular characters aids in the determination. For example, the word by which Shulamith speaks of her lover is invariably the Hebrew דוד, *dodh*, and it should be translated with uniformity, as by the word "beloved." Solomon, in addressing Shulamith, uses another word, which may be translated "love," or "my love," the Hebrew רַיָּה, *rayah*, a word less ardent, less sacred than *dodh*, and used twice by Shulamith herself (2 : 10, 13 ; 5 : 2), when she is modestly referring to herself as beloved. In these cases she naturally takes the less ardent word as signifying the greater modesty upon her part. By such means as these divisions become apparent of which the Authorized version gives no hint.

A common error is made in the disregard of the Hebrew parallelism by many interpreters, who seek to explain difficult phrases or to add to the vivacity of the dialogue by breaking up the members of the parallelism into disjointed sentences assigned to different characters. Even Doctor Griffis, in his "Lily Among Thorns," which, on the whole, is the best book in English upon the Song, falls into this mistake. Such arbitrary and violent division is not necessary to the intelligent explanation of the dialogue and should be avoided. Nor should the comparative simplicity of an Oriental poem be marred by breaks in the discourse other than those that the author has indicated. The effort should be to exclude speakers or changes of speakers, rather than to transgress the natural limitations of an Oriental drama of very early times. For the same reason the action of the poem should be as limited as possible. It is no more in accord with undeveloped forms of art to multiply scenes than to introduce many persons. But nearly all the interpreters who believe in the dramatic form of the Song are betrayed into arrangements of acts and

scenes as definite and as many as a modern playwright would use. Delitzsch makes six acts of two scenes each. Zöckler has five acts. Oetli has fifteen sections, with many speakers. Renan introduces eleven different characters with stage directions corresponding. Ewald divides the poem into five acts, with many scenes. K. F. Keil marks two great divisions, each with three parts. Four American writers recently have contributed valuable works upon the subject: R. G. Moulton, dividing the poem into seven idyls, with several scenes not clearly distinguished; W. C. Daland, making five acts, each with several scenes, some of which he marks "ideal"; W. E. Griffis, who divides it into five acts, each with two or more scenes; and S. I. Curtiss dividing it into twelve scenes. In many cases long explanations are necessary to justify these divisions to the reader, and it is with some difficulty that the interpreter carries out his thought with consistency. We believe that such elaboration is not necessary, and that it is wholly contrary to the spirit of Hebrew poetry. Probably it can be shown that a simpler structure is entirely intelligible, and that to a surprising degree the meaning of the poem will become clear by the addition of exceedingly few words here and there by way of marginal directions. The scene does not change at all, save in the imagination of the speakers. From first to last it is laid in the palace in Jerusalem, whither the maiden has been carried against her will by the officers of the court, perhaps by Solomon's commissary, Abinadab of Mahanaim, of whom we read in 1 Kings 4:14 (see note on 6:13). The first line of the Song is a sigh of the maiden for her absent lover; the last line is a joyous cry of anticipation while she still remains in the palace at Jerusalem. In accordance with this conception of the poem and its simplicity, it is better to avoid the terms "acts" and "scenes." The divisions are only those of time, clearly marked by breaks in the discourse, and the division into days is sufficient.

In arriving at the conception of the poem set forth in the preceding introduction and in the notes that are to follow, reliance has first been placed upon a careful and prolonged study of the Song in the Hebrew. But in addition to the study of the text the writer has sought the aid of all commentaries and monographs that he could obtain, and their helpfulness should be fully acknowledged even when a desire not to break the text has made local reference to them inexpedient. Among the books of value that have given aid, and that may be found useful by the student or reader, are the following: In English: S. R. Driver, "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," C. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1891; R. G. Moulton, "Literary Study of the Bible," D. C. Heath & Co., Boston, 1895; Wm. E. Griffis, "The Lily Among Thorns," Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1890; W. T. Davison, "Books for Bible Students," C. H. Kelly, London, 1894; Washington Gladden, "Seven Puzzling Books," Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1897; Milton S. Terry, "The Song of Songs," Cranston & Curtis, Cincinnati, and Hunt & Eaton, New York, 1894; S. I. Curtiss, in "Bibliotheca Sacra," for January, 1898; Strack, "Old Testament Prophecy," T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1885; F. Delitzsch, "Commentary on the Song of Songs," T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1893; Karl Budde, in "The New World," for March, 1894, answered by Russell Martineau in "American Journal of Philology," Vol. XVI. (No. 4), pp. 435-443; also article by Martineau in "American Journal of Philology," Vol. XIII., pp. 307-328;



W. C. Daland, "The Song of Songs," Leonardsville, N. Y., 1888; articles in Schaff-Herzog "Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge," "The Encyclopedia Britannica," etc. In German: H. Graetz, "*Schir Ha-Schirim*," Willh. Jacobson & Co., Breslau, 1885; D. F. Hitzig, "*Das Hohe-Lied*," S. Hirzel, Leipzig, 1885; D. Otto Thenius, 1855; in "*Die Klaglieder*," S. Hirzel, Leipzig, 1855; E. W. Hengstenberg, "*Das Hohelied Salomonis*," L. Oehmigte, Berlin, 1853; S. Oettli, in "*Die poetischen Hagiographen*," in the "*Kurzgefasster Kommentar*," edited by H. Strack and O. Zockler; C. H. Beck'schen, Nordlingen, 1889, and many others.

In the notes that follow, the text of the Revised version has been used, since the Authorized version is so hopelessly at variance with the conception of the poem herein entertained that it could hardly be employed for the purpose. For a better view of the dramatic structure of the Song a few explanatory words indicating persons and scenes have been introduced.

NOTE.—Among the large number of interpretations of the Song of Songs one view may deserve more attention than has hitherto been given to it. Dr. J. G. Wetzstein was the first to suggest it, and his notes were first published in connection with the Song in an appendix to the commentary by Delitzsch in 1875 (pp. 162 f.). The most important development of Wetzstein's investigations appears in an article by Karl Budde in "The New World," for March, 1894. According to this view the Song is a collection of songs based upon the festivities of the first seven days after marriage in Syria, in which "the young husband and the young wife play king and queen, and are treated and served as such by their village and the neighboring communities that have been invited." Many songs are sung in praise of the bride and bridegroom. First, on the day of the wedding, the sword dance, with its chant in praise of the bride (7 : 1-7) is celebrated. Then on the next day the more restrained praise of the bride from the mouth of the husband is uttered (4 : 1-6). The praise of the husband by the bride follows (5 : 2-16). Going back from chap. 4 the section 3 : 6-11 is explained by the custom of erecting a throne on the morning after the wedding, made from the threshing board, upon which the wedded pair are solemnly enthroned. The "friends of the bridegroom" are the young men of the village and the maidens are the attendants of the bride, represented in the poem by the armed attendants of Solomon and by the daughters of Jerusalem. Indeed, all through the poem the references to Solomon and to Shulamith are not to be taken as actually introducing those persons, but as the great king and as the most celebrated beauty of the kingdom (1 Kings 1 : 3, 4, 15; 2 : 13-23). they are dramatically used to represent the husband and the wife, and the whole celebration is called the King's Week.

The chief objections to the view lie in the fact that it requires a dissection of the Song into many separate fragments, making it quite another work from the poem as it appears in the accepted form; that it presupposes a collector of these poems, with redactors, of whom we otherwise have not the slightest hint; and worse than all, that these literary workmen were so bungling, although they must have been perfectly conversant with the customs which our modern critics confessedly know only in part, that they arranged the songs entirely without reference to the order of the King's Week, and gave us the work in the utmost confusion.



# THE SONG OF SONGS

## Dramatically Arranged and Explained Revised Version

SCENE: The royal palace in Jerusalem, without change.

PERSONS:

SHULAMITH, a rustic maiden, who has been taken from her home and lover in northern Israel, and brought to the king in Jerusalem.

“DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM,” women of the royal harem.

SOLOMON, the king.

### THE TITLE.

CHAPTER I.

1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

FIRST DAY. SHULAMITH AND THE “DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.”

SHULAMITH (*in soliloquy addressing her absent lover*).

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth :

For thy love is better than wine.

3 Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance ;

Thy name is as ointment poured forth ;

Therefore do the virgins love thee.

4 Draw me ; we will run after thee :

The king hath brought me into his chambers :

We will be glad and rejoice in thee,

We will make mention of thy love more than wine :

Rightly do they love thee.

(*Addressing the women, whom she perceives to be mocking her.*)

5 I am black, but comely,

O ye daughters of Jerusalem,

As the tents of Kedar,

As the curtains of Solomon.

6 Look not upon me because I am swarthy,

Because the sun hath scorched me.

My mother's sons were incensed against me,

They made me keeper of the vineyards ;

But mine own vineyard have I not kept.

(*Forgetting the women and again turning to her lover.*)

7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,

Where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest it rest at noon :

For why should I be as one that is veiled  
Beside the flocks of thy companions?

THE "DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM" (*contemptuously*).

8 If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women,  
Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,  
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

SOLOMON (*enters and addresses Shulamith apart*).

9 I have compared thee, O my love,  
To a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.  
10 Thy cheeks are comely with plaits of hair,  
Thy neck with strings of jewels.  
11 We will make thee plaits of gold  
With studs of silver.

SHULAMITH (*answers that her love for the absent one is unshaken*).

12 While the king sat at his table,  
My spikenard sent forth its fragrance.  
13 My beloved is unto me as a bundle of myrrh,  
That lieth between my breasts.  
14 My beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna-flowers  
In the vineyards of Engedi.

SOLOMON.

15 Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair;  
Thine eyes are as doves.

SHULAMITH (*taking up the words of the king, but applying them to her lover*).

16 Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant;  
Also our couch is green.

SOLOMON.

17 The beams of our house are cedars,  
And our rafters are firs.

SHULAMITH.

## CHAPTER II.

1 I am a rose of Sharon,  
A lily of the valleys.

SOLOMON.

2 As a lily among thorns,  
So is my love among the daughters.

SHULAMITH.

3 As the apple trees among the trees of the wood,  
So is my beloved among the sons.  
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,

- And his fruit was sweet to my taste.  
 4 He brought me to the banqueting house,  
 And his banner over me was love.  
 5 Stay ye me with raisins, comfort me with apples :  
 For I am sick of love.  
 6 His left hand is under my head,  
 And his right hand doth embrace me.  
 7 I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,  
 By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,  
 That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,  
 Until it please.

SECOND DAY. SHULAMITH AND THE "DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM."

SHULAMITH (*in rapt soliloquy ; the women listening.*)

- 8 The voice of my beloved ! behold, he cometh,  
 Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.  
 9 My beloved is like a roe or a young hart,  
 Behold, he standeth behind our wall,  
 He looketh in at the windows,  
 He showeth himself through the lattice.  
 10 My beloved spake, and said unto me,  
 Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.  
 11 For, lo, the winter is past,  
 The rain is over and gone ;  
 12 The flowers appear on the earth ;  
 The time of the singing of birds is come,  
 And the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.  
 13 The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,  
 And the vines are in blossom,  
 They give forth their fragrance.  
 Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.  
 14 O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the steep place,  
 Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ;  
 For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.  
 (*She sings a snatch of song.*)  
 15 Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards ;  
 For our vineyards are in blossom.  
 16 My beloved is mine, and I am his :  
 He feedeth his flock among the lilies.  
 17 Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away,  
 Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart  
 Upon the mountains of Bether.

(*Relating a dream.*)

CHAPTER III.

- 1 By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth :  
 I sought him, but I found him not.

- 2 I said, I will rise now, and go about the city,  
 In the streets and in the broad ways,  
 I will seek him whom my soul loveth :  
 I sought him, but I found him not.
- 3 The watchmen that go about the city found me :  
 To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth ?
- 4 It was but a little that I passed from them,  
 When I found him whom my soul loveth :  
 I held him, and would not let him go,  
 Until I brought him into my mother's house,  
 And into the chamber of her that conceived me.
- 5 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
 By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,  
 That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,  
 Until it please.

THIRD DAY. SOLOMON ; THE " DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM " ; SHULAMITH.

THE WOMEN (*greeting the king as he enters*).

- 6 Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke,  
 Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,  
 With all powders of the merchant ?
- 7 Behold, it is the litter of Solomon ;  
 Three score mighty men are about it,  
 Of the mighty men of Israel.
- 8 They all handle the sword, and are expert in war :  
 Every man hath his sword upon his thigh,  
 Because of fear in the night.
- 9 King Solomon made himself a palanquin  
 Of the wood of Lebanon.
- 10 He made the pillars thereof of silver,  
 The bottom thereof of gold, the seat of it of purple,  
 The midst thereof being paved with love,  
 From the daughters of Jerusalem.
- 11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon,  
 With the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him in the day of his  
 espousals,  
 And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

SOLOMON (*addressing Shulamith*).

CHAPTER IV.

- 1 Behold, thou art fair, my love ; behold, thou art fair ;  
 Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil :  
 Thy hair is as a flock of goats,  
 That lie along the side of Mount Gilead.
- 2 Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly shorn,  
 Which are come up from the washing ;  
 Whereof every one hath twins,

- And none is bereaved among them.
- 3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,  
And thy mouth is comely.  
Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate  
Behind thy veil.
- 4 Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armory,  
Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers,  
All the shields of the mighty men.
- 5 Thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins of a roe, which feed among  
the lilies.
- 6 Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away,  
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh,  
And to the hill of frankincense.
- 7 Thou art all fair, my love ;  
And there is no spot in thee.
- 8 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride,  
With me from Lebanon :  
Look from the top of Amara,  
From the top of Senir and Hermon,  
From the lions' dens,  
From the mountains of the leopards.
- 9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride ;  
Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,  
With one chain of thy neck.
- 10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my bride !  
How much better is thy love than wine !  
And the smell of thine ointments than all manner of spices !
- 11 Thy lips, O my bride, drop as the honeycomb :  
Honey and milk are under thy tongue ;  
And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.
- 12 A garden shut up is my sister, my bride ;  
A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
- 13 Thy shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, with precious fruits ;  
Henna with spikenard plants,
- 14 Spikenard and saffron,  
Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense ;  
Myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices.
- 15 Thou art a fountain of gardens,  
A well of living waters,  
And flowing streams from Lebanon.
- SHULAMITH (*turning wearily from the king*).
- 16 Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south ;  
Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.  
Let my beloved come into his garden,  
And eat his precious fruits.

SOLOMON (*appropriating to himself what Shulamith has said of her lover*).

## CHAPTER V.

- 1 I am come into my garden, my sister, my bride :  
 I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ;  
 I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey ;  
 I have drunk my wine with my milk.  
 Eat, O friends ;  
 Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

(*Shulamith withdraws, incensed at the king's profane use of her sacred word, Beloved, as he uses it of all lovers : " Drink abundantly, O ye beloved ones."*)

## FOURTH DAY. SHULAMITH ; THE " DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM."

SHULAMITH (*relating a dream of the past night*.)

- 2 I was asleep, but my heart waked :  
 It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,  
 Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled :  
 For my head is filled with dew,  
 My locks with the drops of the night.  
 (I answered)
- 3 I have put off my coat ; how shall I put it on ?  
 I have washed my feet ; how shall I defile them ?
- 4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,  
 And my heart was moved for him.
- 5 I rose up to open to my beloved ;  
 And my hands dropped with myrrh,  
 And my fingers with liquid myrrh,  
 Upon the handle of the bolt.
- 6 I opened to my beloved ;  
 But my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone.  
 My soul had failed me when he spake :  
 I sought him, but I could not find him ;  
 I called him, but he gave me no answer.
- 7 The watchmen that go about the city found me,  
 They smote me, they wounded me ;  
 The keepers of the wall took away my mantle from me.
- 8 I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved,  
 That ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

THE WOMEN (*speaking contemptuously*).

- 9 What is thy beloved more than another beloved,  
 O thou fairest among women ?  
 What is thy beloved more than another beloved,  
 That thou dost so adjure us ?



## SHULAMITH.

- 10 My beloved is white and ruddy,  
The chiefest among ten thousand.
- 11 His head is as the most fine gold,  
His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
- 12 His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks ;  
Washed with milk and fitly set.
- 13 His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as banks of sweet herbs :  
His lips are as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh.
- 14 His hands are as rings of gold set with beryl ;  
His body is as ivory work overlaid with sapphires.
- 15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold :  
His aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
- 16 His mouth is most sweet ; yea, he is altogether lovely.  
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,  
O daughters of Jerusalem.

THE WOMEN (*still speaking contemptuously*).

## CHAPTER VI.

- 1 Whither is thy beloved gone,  
O thou fairest among women ?  
Whither hath thy beloved turned him,  
That we may seek him with thee ?

## SHULAMITH.

- 2 My beloved is gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices,  
To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
- 3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine  
He feedeth his flock among the lilies.

## FIFTH DAY. SOLOMON ; SHULAMITH ; THE " DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM. "

## SOLOMON.

- 4 Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,  
Comely as Jerusalem,  
Terrible as an army with banners.
- 5 Turn away thine eyes from me,  
For they have overcome me.  
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,  
That lie along the side of Gilead.
- 6 Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes,  
Which are come up from the washing ;  
Whereof every one hath twins,  
And none is bereaved among them.
- 7 Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate  
Behind thy veil.

- 8 There are three score queens, and four score concubines,  
And virgins without number.
- 9 My dove, my undefiled, is but one ;  
She is the only one of her mother ;  
She is the choice one of her that bare her.  
The daughters saw her, and called her blessed ;  
Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.
- 10 Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,  
Fair as the moon,  
Clear as the sun,  
Terrible as an army with banners?

SHULAMITH.

- 11 I went down into the garden of nuts,  
To see the green plants of the valley,  
To see whether the vine budded,  
And the pomegranates were in flower.
- 12 Or ever I was aware, my soul set me  
Among the chariots of my princely people.

SOLOMON AND THE WOMEN (*as Shulamith withdraws*).

- 13 Return, return, O Shulamite,  
Return, return, that we may look upon thee.

SHULAMITH.

Why will ye look upon the Sulamite?

THE WOMEN (*while the king listens*).

As upon the dance of Mahanaim.

#### CHAPTER VII.

- 1 How beautiful are thy feet in sandals, O prince's daughter !  
The joints of thy thighs are like jewels,  
The work of the hands of a cunning workman.
- 2 Thy navel is like a round goblet,  
Wherein no mingled wine is wanting :  
Thy belly is like an heap of wheat  
Set about with lilies.
- 3 Thy two breasts are like two fawns  
That are twins of a roe.
- 4 Thy neck is like a tower of ivory ;  
Thine eyes as the pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-Rabbim.  
Thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon  
Which looketh toward Damascus.
- 5 Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,  
And the hair of thine head like purple.  
The king is held captive in the tresses thereof.

## SOLOMON.

- 6 How fair and how pleasant art thou,  
O love, for delights!
- 7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree,  
And thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
- 8 I said, I will climb up into the palm tree,  
I will take hold of the branches thereof:  
Let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine,  
And the smell of thy breath like apples;
- 9 And thy mouth like the best wine.

SHULAMITH (*interrupting*).

- That goeth down smoothly for my beloved,  
Gliding through the lips of those that are asleep.
- 10 I am my beloved's,  
And his desire is toward me.
- 11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;  
Let us lodge in the villages.
- 12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;  
Let us see whether the vine hath budded, and its blossom be open,  
And the pomegranates be in flower:  
There will I give thee my love.
- 13 The mandrakes give forth fragrance,  
And at our doors are all manner of precious fruits, new and old,  
Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

## CHAPTER VIII.

- 1 Oh, that thou wert as my brother,  
That sucked the breasts of my mother!  
When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee;  
Yea, and none would despise me.
- 2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house,  
Who would instruct me;  
I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine,  
Of the juice of my pomegranate.
- 3 His left hand should be under my head,  
And his right hand should embrace me.
- 4 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,  
Until it please.

SIXTH DAY. SHULAMITH (*alone, having received the royal promise for her release, and anticipating her meeting with her lover*).

- 5 Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,  
Leaning upon her beloved?  
Under the apple tree I awaked thee:

- There thy mother was in travail with thee,  
 There was she in travail that brought thee forth.
- 6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm :  
 For love is strong as death ;  
 Jealousy is cruel as the grave :  
 The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,  
 A very flame of the Lord.
- 7 Many waters cannot quench love,  
 Neither can the floods drown it :  
 If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,  
 He would utterly be contemned.

*(She sings a folk song in praise of purity.)*

- 8 We have a little sister,  
 And she hath no breasts :  
 What shall we do for our sister  
 In the day when she shall be spoken for ?
- 9 If she be a wall,  
 We will build upon her a turret of silver :  
 If she be a door,  
 We will inclose her with boards of cedar.
- 10 I am a wall, and my breasts like the towers thereof :  
 Then was I in his eyes as one that found peace.
- 11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon ;  
 He let out the vineyard unto keepers ;  
 Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.
- 12 My vineyard, which is mine, is before me :  
 Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand,  
 And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

*(She cries with longing for her beloved to come.)*

- 13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens,  
 The companions hearken for thy voice ;  
 Cause me to hear it.
- 14 Make haste, my beloved,  
 And be thou like to a roe or to a young hart  
 Upon the mountains of spices.

# THE SONG OF SONGS

## CHAPTER I.

- 1 THE song of songs, which is Solomon's.
- 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth : for thy love is better than wine.
- 3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.
- 4 Draw me, we will run after thee : the king hath brought me into his chambers : we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine : the upright love thee.
- 5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
- 6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me : my mother's children were angry with me ; they made me the keeper of the vineyards ; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.
- 7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions ?
- 8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

- 1 THE Song of songs, which is Solomon's.
- 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth : For thy love is better than wine.
- 3 Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance ; Thy name is as ointment poured forth ; Therefore do the virgins love thee.
- 4 Draw me ; we will run after thee, The king hath brought me into his chambers : We will be glad and rejoice in thee, We will make mention of thy love more than of wine : Rightly do they love thee.
- 5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, As the tents of Kedar, As the curtains of Solomon.
- 6 Look not upon me, because I am swarthy, Because the sun hath scorched me, My mother's sons were incensed against me, They made me keeper of the vineyards ; But mine own vineyard have I not kept.
- 7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, Where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest it to rest at noon : For why should I be as one that is veiled Beside the flocks of thy companions ?
- 8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

**Chap. I. THE TITLE. 1. The Song of songs.** The best of all songs. The word used generally signifies a song in honor of some one, or in celebration of his excellencies. **Which is Solomon's.** Apparently an ascription of authorship not consistent with the contents of the Song itself. The verse is a title prefixed by some other hand than that of the author. See Introduction.

**FIRST DAY, 1: 2 to 2: 7. 2. Let him kiss me . . . For thy love,** etc. The speaker, a maiden taken from her home in northern Israel by the servants of King Solomon for his harem, longs for her absent lover, beginning in soliloquy and instantly passing to the more vivid form of address, as if her lover were actually present. **3. Ointments.** Ointments and perfumes are constantly used in the poem to indicate either the personal excellencies of the characters, or, more directly, the means of adornment. At the supposed time of the poem Palestine was a garden filled with fruit and gum-bearing trees, many of them importations from other lands and highly valued. **Thy name.** The mere

mention of the lover's name as, in Hebrew custom, significant of all his qualities, affected the mind as the senses would be by fragrance, attracting not only Shulamith, but all the virgins her companions. **4. Draw me ; we will run.** As if yet in the freedom of her native surroundings she imagines herself and companions to play with her lover. But then the sad reality recurs to her: **The king,** etc. But even the royal palace is comparatively without attractions. **5. I am black,** etc. The jealous women have mocked her sun-browned face. She explains that while forced to keep the vineyards of others her own beauty, her vineyard, had been neglected. Yet it is beauty honored by her lover, recognized by Solomon. Divide the speech thus in meaning: "I am black as the tents of Kedar, but comely as the curtains of Solomon." **7. As one that is veiled.** A woman among strangers wearing the veil. Why should she be dwelling among strangers when all her longings were for her lover's presence?

**8. If thou know not.** The women now speak for the first time. With sarcasm they

9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.

11 We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.

12 While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

13 A bundle of myrrh is my well beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

14 My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.

15 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.

16 Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.

17 The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

9 I have compared thee, O my love,

To a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.

10 Thy cheeks are comely with plaits of hair,

Thy neck with strings of jewels.

11 We will make thee plaits of gold  
With studs of silver.

12 While the king sat at his table,

My spikenard sent forth its fragrance.

13 My beloved is unto me as a bundle of myrrh,

That lieth betwixt my breasts.

14 My beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna-flowers

In the vineyards of Engedi.

15 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;

Thine eyes are as doves.

16 Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: Also our couch is green.

17 The beams of our house are cedars,  
And our rafters are firs.

advise her to search, as a shepherdess or an inmodest woman looking for a lover.

9. Solomon enters and seeks to win her love.

**A steed.** A favorite horse was the most precious possession, and especially at this time when the introduction of horses and chariots into Palestine was recent. Although the use of horses had been forbidden at an early time (Deut. 17: 16), David had established a force of cavalry and chariots in his army (2 Sam. 8: 4), and Solomon increased the force to an immense number (1 Kings 4: 26). This was brought about by Solomon's connection with Egypt, and the reference to the chariots of Pharaoh is thus to be explained. Possibly the name "Pharaoh-chariot" was applied to the chariots in Solomon's kingdom as having been introduced from Egypt. The word for "horse" is literally "mare" in this passage. The comparison is not only of pride and gracefulness, but of overcoming strength, as in 4: 4 and 6: 4. **10. Checks are comely with plaits.** Either plaits of hair or chains of coins gathered in loops like the copper or silver pieces seen to-day in Syria upon the girls and young women. Instead of these the king will give her rich ornaments worthy of his state. Perhaps there is still a reference to the barbaric way in which favorite steeds were caparisoned.

**12. While the king sat, etc.** Shulamith answers that her happiness is not in these things, nor even in the king's presence, for while he was feasting with his lords her thoughts were with her absent lover. **My spikenard.** The attractions of her lover were always present to her, like the penetrating odor of nard. The king could forget her for the hour when he was feasting; she could not for a moment forget her beloved. **13. Bundle of myrrh.** A little bag containing gum, or more probably a vial of

semi-fluid ointment, which was very precious, and was worn about the person all the time. Isa. 3: 20, A. V., "tablets," Marg., "houses of the soul"; R. V., "perfume boxes." These "soul houses" were the symbols of love, the precious ointment lying next the heart even at night, signifying that the spirit of the beloved one was imprisoned there like the ointment in the vial. Compare the simile in Tennyson's song in "The Miller's Daughter." **14. Henna-flowers.** A species of cypress indigenous to India, perhaps imported for the royal gardens. Engedi was an oasis of great natural luxuriance near the terrible desert of the Dead Sea, and at the entrance of a desolate pass across the hilly-country of the desert of Judea. It was one of the most beautiful spots in Palestine, and was renowned throughout the land.

**15.** Solomon speaks, but his words seem only to incite the maiden to further expressions of love for her own, and his words only suggest the application of them by her to the only one for whom she cherishes such sentiments of affection. **Thine eyes are as doves.** Gentleness and sweetness, trustfulness yet timidity, are indicated as the expression of the maiden's eyes.

**16. Thou art fair, my beloved.** Shulamith takes the very words of the king, only changing them to insert her own peculiar appellation for her lover, which throughout marks her speech of him, and which we translate by the word "beloved." **Our couch is green.** It is the remembrance of the grassy banks in her own country on which she and her lover had met.

**17. The beams, etc.** The king contrasts the rustic ideals of the maiden with the splendor of his palace in which he would have her make her home. The cedars of Lebanon, most costly of all wood, had been used in its building (2 Sam. 5: 11), and its rafters were the strong

## CHAPTER II.

1 I AM the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

2 As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

4 He brought me to the banquetting house, and his banner over me was love.

5 Stay ye me with figs, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.

6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

7 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

8 The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

9 My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth

1 I AM a rose of Sharon,  
A lily of the valleys.

2 As a lily among thorns,

So is my love among the daughters.

3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,  
So is my beloved among the sons.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight,  
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.

4 He brought me to the banquetting house,  
And his banner over me was love.

5 Stay ye me with raisins, comfort me with apples:  
For I am sick of love.

6 His left hand is under my head,  
And his right hand doth embrace me.

7 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,  
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,  
Until it please.

8 The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh,  
Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

9 My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:  
Behold, he standeth behind our wall,

firs capable of upholding the wide expanse of roof, made of stone, placed upon them.

**Chap. 2. 1.** In contrast with the king's tempting splendor, Shulamith declares herself unsuited to the life in such a palace; she is, rather, a natural flower, the rose of Sharon, the wide plain that extends along the coast, greeting the traveler to-day with its luxuriant growth of sward and flowers and abundant grain. **Lily.** Perhaps the scarlet anemone of Palestine.

**2.** With a deft turn of Shulamith's word, Solomon declares her peerless even as a lily, all other women being only as thorns in comparison.

**3. Apple tree.** Shulamith, deaf to the skillful flattery of the king, turns her thought again to her beloved. He is like an apple tree, so much more beautiful and delight-giving than the wild trees of the forest. The apple, fragrant and sweet, yet indigenous and not depending upon cultivation, offered one of the most palatable fruits of Palestine. **I sat down,** etc. Protection and delight are mingled in the figure.

**4. His banner over me was love.** No silken canopy, no royal standard, was needed, for her lover was enough, and his love would give all protection and glory. The **banquetting house** is a sign of the complete satisfaction of her lot. She needs no palatial hall and many companions, if only she can have her beloved. **5. Stay ye me with raisins,** etc. Literally, raisin cakes, or cakes of pressed grapes. Raisins and apples, refreshing fruits, with a reference to what she has said about her lover—so strong is her love that she almost faints beneath it, and the strength and stimu-

lating power of her beloved, so like apples and the pressed vine-fruit, alone can comfort her.

**6. His left hand,** etc. R. V., "Let his left hand be under my head," or, as Professor Curtiss suggests (citing Driver, "A Treatise on the Use of the Hebrew Tenses," London, 1892, pp. 13, 14), "His left hand would be under my head," if he were to be brought to comfort her. There is no mystic significance, as some would suggest, in the reference to the left and right hand. **7. I adjure you.** Shulamith turns to the women of the harem, to whom the purity and faithfulness of her own love are strange, and beseeches them to regard love as sacred, not the creation of artificial circumstances or forced desire. **By the roes,** etc. By all the natural and simple laws of the wild and spontaneous life around them. **Stir not up, nor awaken love, Until it please.** The A. V. here is wholly unintelligible. A mere adjuration not to awaken a lover until he is ready to be awakened is feeble, the end to be gained too feeble for the adjuration. The R. V. gives the verse the proper dignity.

**SECOND DAY, 2: 8 to 3: 5. 8. The voice of my beloved!** Shulamith and the daughters of Jerusalem are alone in the women's apartments of the palace. The maiden speaks in soliloquy, apparently not regarding the presence of her companions, who, however, are watching her in ill-natured amusement. Shulamith is recalling vividly her lover's voice, appearance, actions, words, as an absent girl might do. **Leaping upon the mountains,** etc. With the agility of a shepherd and the eagerness of a lover to reach his loved one. **9. Our**

at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.

10 My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

11 For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

13 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

14 O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

15 Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

17 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

He looketh in at the windows,  
He sheweth himself through the lattice.

10 My beloved spake, and said unto me,  
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away

11 For, lo, the winter is past,  
The rain is over and gone;

12 The flowers appear on the earth;  
The time of the singing of birds is come,  
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

13 The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,  
And the vines are in blossom,  
They give forth their fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

14 O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in  
the covert of the steep place,

Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy  
voice;

For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is  
comely.

15 Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the  
vineyards;

For our vineyards are in blossom.

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his:

He feedeth his flock among the lilies.

17 Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away,  
Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a  
young hart

Upon the mountains of Bether.

### CHAPTER III.

1 BY night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

2 I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

3 The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

1 BY night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth:

I sought him, but I found him not.

2 I said, I will rise now, and go about the city,  
in the streets and in the broad ways,

I will seek him whom my soul loveth:

I sought him, but I found him not.

3 The watchmen that go about the city found me:  
To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul  
loveth?

wall. The wall of the house, behind which he playfully hides and then suddenly shows himself at the latticed windows. 11. **Winter . . . rain.** The winter rains in Palestine make out-of-door life impossible. But the first spring is the most delightful season of the year. Already trees are budding, grass springing, and the fountains and water courses are full. The freshness of nature in this paragraph is in distinct contrast with the dull, monotonous, artificial life of the city and palace. 12. **The turtle.** A species of dove that migrates to Egypt in the colder seasons and returns in the spring. 13. **The fig tree ripeneth her green figs.** The fruit of the fig is put forth very early in March, and before the leaves have come to maturity. Compare the curse upon the fig tree in the Gospel, as related by Mark (11: 12-14), showing that leaves and fruit were naturally together upon the tree, while if the leaves only were there it was an unnatural case, and the tree with its foliage of profession might well be made the accursed type of the pharisaic spirit, full of fair promise but barren in deed. 14. **Clefts of the rock.** Timid and gentle, the dove builds her nest in places inaccessible.

15. **Take us the foxes.** It is best to suppose that the maiden here sings a snatch of song,

such as the vinedressers often would sing. Her imagination has heard her lover calling her voice sweet; therefore she sings as he had often heard her. Foxes are fond of grapes, as in Æsop's fable. The young foxes were especially the enemies of the vineyards, as they nibbled the tender shoots. 16. This verse is a return to her own speech. 17. **Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away.** That is, during the heated hours, when men usually remained quiet, her lover should hasten to her side, that they might enjoy the cool evening together. **Mountains of Bether.** Or, mountains of separation, the mountains that divided the lovers, from the Hebrew *bathar*, to cut up. Perhaps we should read "the craggy mountains," difficult to pass.

Chap. 3. 1. **By night,** etc. Shulamith now relates a dream to the women. She seemed to search through the mazes of a city, its streets and squares (broad ways). The watchmen found her, and in her rustic innocence she supposed that they must know her lover; but she could learn nothing from them. At last, suddenly, she met her lover and took him to her mother's home, that place in all the world where a maiden and her lover may most safely and



4 *It was* but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

5 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roses, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he please.

6 Who *is* this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

7 Behold his bed, which *is* Solomon's; threescore valiant men *are* about it, of the valiant of Israel.

8 They all hold swords, *being* expert in war: every man *hath* his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

9 King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.

10 He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

4 It was but a little that I passed from them, When I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, Until I had brought him into my mother's house, And into the chamber of her that conceived me.

5 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the roses, and by the hinds of the field, That ye stir not up, nor awaken love, Until it please.

6 Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all powders of the merchant?

7 Behold, it is the litter of Solomon; Threescore mighty men *are* about it, Of the mighty men of Israel.

8 They all handle the sword, *and* *are* expert in war: Every man *hath* his sword upon his thigh, Because of fear in the night.

9 King Solomon made himself a palanquin Of the wood of Lebanon.

10 He made the pillars thereof of silver, The bottom thereof of gold, the seat of it of purple, The midst thereof being paved with love, From the daughters of Jerusalem.

11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, With the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him in the day of his espousals, And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

CHAPTER IV.

1 BEHOLD, thou art fair, my love: behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead.

2 Thy teeth *are* like a flock of sheep that *are* even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none *is* barren among them.

3 Thy lips *are* like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech *is* comely: thy temples *are* like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

4 Thy neck *is* like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

1 BEHOLD, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;

Thine eyes *are* as doves behind thy veil;

Thy hair *is* as a flock of goats,

That lie along the side of mount Gilead.

2 Thy teeth *are* like a flock of ewes that *are* newly shorn,

Which *are* come up from the washing;

Whereof every one hath twins,

And none *is* bereaved among them.

3 Thy lips *are* like a thread of scarlet,

And thy mouth *is* comely:

Thy temples *are* like a piece of pomegranate

Behind thy veil.

4 Thy neck *is* like the tower of David builded for an armoury,

Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers,

All the shields of the mighty men.

happily be. 5. The first recurrence of the refrain in which the moral purpose of the Song is declared. It is the *motif* of the symphony.

THIRD DAY, 3: 6 to 5: 1. 6. Who is this, etc. The women of the palace, with Shulamith, looking from the lattices see the royal litter approaching the harem, and they break forth into a chant of greeting to the monarch. 9. A palanquin. In the East, and particularly in Palestine, the ways are often inaccessible to wheeled vehicles, and at all times the palanquin, borne by men or mules, was more luxurious for riding than the chariot without springs. The luxury of the royal equipage as here depicted is in accord with all that we know about Solomon's court. 10. Paved with love. The interior was overlaid with some rich work made by the women of the palace. 11. Go forth, etc. The women go to the entrance of the women's apart-

ments to meet the king. With the crown. Perhaps Solomon had decked himself with unusual magnificence to win the Shulamite. He may have put on the crown that his mother had placed on his head, in accordance with Oriental custom, many years before, when he had espoused the daughter of Pharaoh; or perhaps he intended now to raise this peasant girl to an equality with his queen; or the language may serve only in an imaginative way to suggest that Solomon comes with the purpose of a bridegroom in his heart.

Chap. 4. 1. Behold, thou art fair. Solomon addresses Shulamith and by varied comparisons praises her beauty. 2. None is bereaved. The whole comparison is to show the whiteness and perfection of the teeth. 4. Tower of David. Symmetry and strength

5 Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

7 Thou *art* all fair, my love; *there is* no spot in thee.

8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, *my* spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

10 How fair is thy love, my sister, *my* spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

11 Thy lips, *O my* spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk *are* under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments *is* like the smell of Lebanon.

12 A garden inclosed *is* my sister, *my* spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

13 Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,

14 Spikenard and saffron: calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

5 Thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins of a roe, which feed among the lilies.

6 Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

7 Thou art all fair, my love; and there is no spot in thee.

8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* bride, With me from Lebanon:

Look from the top of Amana, From the top of Senir and Hermon, From the lions' dens, From the mountains of the leopards.

9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, *my* bride;

Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, With one chain of thy neck.

10 How fair is thy love, my sister, *my* bride! How much better is thy love than wine! And the smell of thine ointments than all manner of spices!

11 Thy lips, *O my* bride, drop as the honeycomb: Honey and milk are under thy tongue; And the smell of thy garments *is* like the smell of Lebanon.

12 A garden shut up *is* my sister, *my* bride; A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

13 Thy shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, with precious fruits;

Henna with spikenard plants, 14 Spikenard and saffron, Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense;

Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.

15 *Thou art* a fountain of gardens, A well of living waters, And flowing streams from Lebanon.

16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; Blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his precious fruits.

are signified. **A thousand bucklers.** The hanging of shields in an armory showed the power of the king, and often these warlike ornaments were the pride of monarchs. Solomon had hung in his palace two hundred targets of beaten gold and three hundred shields of beaten gold (1 Kings 10 : 16, 17). **6. Mountain of myrrh.** All through the heated day the king would betake himself to the cool and odorous delights of his refuge with his love, like a mountain covered with spicy woods. **8. Come with me from Lebanon.** The king now seeks to entice the maiden by reminding her of the extent of his kingdom. **Amana . . . Senir . . . Hermon.** Amana was that part of the anti-Lebanon range from which flowed the river of the same name, giving life to the oasis and city of Damascus. Hermon is the great peak now known by that name, and Senir a part of the anti-Lebanon sometimes confounded with Hermon (Deut. 3 : 9; 1 Chron. 5 : 23). From these loftiest peaks they could look even to the boundaries of the kingdom. **Lions' dens.** These words have occasioned needless perplexity, many interpreters resorting to a reference to the throne

of Solomon surrounded by carved lions (1 Kings 10 : 19-20), and making the "mountains of the leopards" refer to the palaces of the courtiers! The reference is simple. These outlying mountains were infested with wild beasts, but even these savage places were within the limit of the broad domain which Solomon would share with his queen. **12. A garden shut up.** Kept solely for its owner's enjoyment. **A fountain sealed.** A spring near Solomon's Pools, a few miles south of Bethlehem, is to-day inclosed and called the Sealed Fountain. In a land where water is always so precious, a fountain might well be secured against all contamination. **13. Henna.** See note on 1 : 14. **15. Fountain of gardens.** Like the Abana and Pharpar, producing fertile plains, the oasis of gardens and orchards in which Damascus stands.

**16. Awake, O north wind,** etc. Shulamith, taking up the figure suggested by the king in the word gardens, refers to herself as belonging to her lover, not to the king, and desiring that she may be made most satisfying to him.

## CHAPTER V.

1 I AM come into my garden, my sister, *my spouse*: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

2 I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.*

3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: *my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him: I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

7 The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that *I am sick of love.*

1 I AM come into my garden, my sister, *my bride*: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

2 I was asleep, but my heart waked: *It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,*

*Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled:*

*For my head is filled with dew,*

*My locks with the drops of the night.*

3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?

4 I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,

*And my heart was moved for him.*

5 I rose up to open to my beloved;

*And my hands dropped with myrrh,*

*And my fingers with liquid myrrh,*

*Upon the handles of the bolt.*

6 I opened to my beloved;

*But my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone.*

*My soul had failed me when he spake:*

*I sought him, but I could not find him;*

*I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

7 The watchmen that go about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me;

*The keepers of the walls took away my mantle from me.*

8 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved,

*That ye tell him, that I am sick of love.*

**Chap. 5. 1.** Solomon goes on with his speech, ignoring the maiden's reference to her lover as her rightful possessor. Solomon calls her his own garden, applying to her the terms "sister" and "bride," often used interchangeably with reference to the wife of a monarch.

This whole section of the third day well indicates how difficult, if not impossible, it is to give the language any mystical or secondary reference to Christ, as typified by Solomon, and the church under the guise of the Shulamith. We read with wonder the explanatory headings of the fourth and fifth chapters in the A. V.: "Christ setteth forth the graces of his church. He showeth his love to her. The church prayeth to be made fit for his presence. Christ awaketh the church with his calling. The church having a taste of Christ's love, is sick of love. A description of Christ by his graces." If this were true, this writer, confessedly of a very early age, would have had a prevision of the spiritual things of Christianity immeasurably in advance of any other writer of the Old Testament, and he produced in such a passage as this descriptions that could not have failed to be used by the inspired men of the New Testament. But apart from such considerations, what is there in the language itself to suggest any such comparison unless by way of remote and fragmentary illustration? How can such details of

description be forced into signifying the excellencies of Christ? Any attempt to apply details to the particular "graces" of Christ and the church would result as truly in grotesqueness, as the common gross and absurd applications of the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes to the decay of the human body are grotesque. The passage of the poem that follows in the Fifth day, 7: 1-5 is equally impossible if it is "a further description of the church's graces"!

**FOURTH DAY, 5: 2 to 6: 3. 2. I was asleep, but my heart waked.** Again the maiden describes a dream. She has seemed to hear her lover seeking admission to her house; but in her modesty she has delayed to admit him and he has disappeared. The insertion of two words, "I answered," between verses 2 and 3 will show the thought more clearly. **4. The hole of the door.** By which the latch or bar might be removed. **5. Upon the handles.** Her hand dropping liquid myrrh upon the bolt is the symbol of the love, eager and longing, with which she would have welcomed him. **6. My soul had failed me.** With a momentary lack of courage she had delayed and the lover had departed. **8. I adjure you,** etc. This is said not with any real expectation that these women would find her lover, but rather as a simple and earnest confession of her love before those who were most ready to heap scorn upon it.

9 What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, O thou fairest among women? what *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, that thou doth so charge us?

10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

11 His head *is* as the most fine gold, his locks *are* bushy, *and* black as a raven.

12 His eyes *are* as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, *and* fitly set.

13 His cheeks *are* as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips *like* lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

14 His hands *are* as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly *is* as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

15 His legs *are* as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance *is* as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

16 His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely. This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

9 What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, O thou fairest among women? What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, That thou dost so adjure us?

10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy, The chiefest among ten thousand.

11 His head *is* as the most fine gold,

His locks *are* bushy, *and* black as a raven.

12 His eyes *are* like doves beside the water brooks;

Washed with milk, *and* fitly set.

13 His cheeks *are* as a bed of spices, as banks of sweet herbs:

His lips *are* as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh.

14 His hands *are* as rings of gold set with beryl:

His body *is* as ivory work overlaid with sapphires.

15 His legs *are* as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold:

His aspect *is* like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

16 His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely.

This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER VI.

1 WHITHER *is* thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither *is* thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

2 My beloved *is* gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardeus, and to gather lilies.

3 I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

4 Thou *art* beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

5 Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

6 Thy teeth *are* as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and *there is* not one barren among them.

7 As a piece of a pomegranate *are* thy temples within thy locks.

8 There *are* threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.

9 My dove, my undefiled *is but one*; she *is the only one* of her mother, she *is the choice one* of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

10 Who *is* she that looketh forth as the morning,

1 WHITHER *is* thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither hath thy beloved turned him, That we may seek him with thee?

2 My beloved *is* gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices,

To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

3 I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine: He feedeth *his flock* among the lilies.

4 Thou *art* beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,

Comely as Jerusalem,

Terrible as an army with banners.

5 Turn away thine eyes from me,

For they have overcome me,

Thy hair *is* as a flock of goats,

That lie along the side of Gilead.

6 Thy teeth *are* like a flock of ewes,

Which *are* come up from the washing;

Whereof every one hath twins,

And none *is* bereaved among them.

7 Thy temples *are* like a piece of a pomegranate

Behind thy veil.

8 There *are* threescore queens, and fourscore concubines,

And virgins without number.

9 My dove, my undefiled, *is but one*;

She *is the only one* of her mother;

She *is the choice one* of her that bare her.

The daughters saw her, and called her blessed;

Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they

praised her.

10 Who *is* she that looketh forth as the morning, Fair as the moon,

**Chap. 6. FIFTH DAY, 6:4 to 8:4. 4. Tirzah.** The first royal city of the northern kingdom of Israel until the time of Omri, who founded Samaria and made that city the capital of his kingdom. The name means "pleasantness" or "sweetness," and the place was renowned for its beauty. In connection with the mention of Jerusalem in the next verse, the two capitals of the Hebrew people are brought together as the cities around which all the loyalty, reverence, and admiration of the people were centered. **Terrible as an army with banners.** This does not seem a natural simile for a lover to apply to his mistress, but all of Solomon's com-

parisons are such as a king might make. Here he means that her beauty is absolutely irresistible. **8. Threescore queens,** etc. From 1 Kings 11:3 we know that this statement, poetic and rhythmic, was far exceeded by the facts. In contrast Shulamith stands alone, as declared in ver. 9. **9. My dove, my undefiled, is but one.** Even the queens themselves **praised her**, as indeed they did when in the presence of Solomon but at no other time, for the sake of flattering the king and winning his favor. **10.** If we supply the word "saying" before this verse, it is made the speech of the women as quoted by Solomon.

fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

11 I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.

12 Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.

13 Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.

Clear as the sun,  
Terrible as an army with banners?

11 I went down into the garden of nuts,  
To see the green plants of the valley,  
To see whether the vine budded,  
And the pomegranates were in flower.

12 Or ever I was aware, my soul set me  
Among the chariots of my princely people.

13 Return, return, O Shulamite;  
Return, return, that we may look upon thee.

Why will ye look upon the Shulamite,  
As upon the dance of Mahanaim?

**11. I went down, etc.** It is not necessary to suppose, with some, that the king's gardens in the valleys below Jerusalem are intended. Nearly every town in the East is upon a hill-top, and the gardens lie beneath the walls upon the slopes and in the valleys. Thus these were the gardens just outside the walls of her native place, Shulem. **12. Or ever I was aware.** She recalls the scene in her northern home at the time of her capture, and tells of the surprise and fright with which she found herself surrounded by the king's servants and their chariots. **My soul.** My desire, my wish to go forth from the safe precincts of home and town. **Chariots of my princely people.** R. V. Margin, reads, "Or, made me like the chariots of Amminadib," as in the A. V., a reading that seems to be entirely void of meaning. The passage is confessedly the most difficult one in the poem. The Hebrew word is Amminadib. If the term is not a proper name, and if the direction of the Masora is correct, to read it as two words, it means "my princely, or willing people." The Septuagint reads Aminadab, a proper name. The Vulgate reads as two words: "my willing people." Luther keeps the Hebrew form of the words but evidently as a proper name. If we note that the Septuagint spells the term with one m and gives the final syllable a for i, Aminadab; and if we combine with this peculiarity the fact that a reference to Mahanaim immediately follows (ver. 13), may we not find the clue to the difficulty? A very slight change in one letter will make the reading Ahinadab, and Ahinadab was Solomon's chief officer, the purveyor for the palace, stationed at Mahanaim (1 Kings 4 : 7, 14, 27). To such officers must have fallen the duty of providing inmates for the king's palace, and it may easily be understood that Ahinadab, upon some excursion to the vicinity of Shulem, came upon this girl in the gardens by the wayside and carried her away to Jerusalem. Thus she remembers how her unguarded desire to wander in the gardens resulted in her surprise there by the king's officer, Ahinadab, the source of all her woes. The mention

of Ahinadab suggests the thought of Mahanaim to the women, who immediately proceed to urge Shulamith to dance, as the well-known dance of Mahanaim would fully display her charms.

**13. Return, return.** The usual meaning of this Hebrew word is "return," as here translated, and if we so read it, we must suppose Shulamith withdrawing, when her companions call out to her to come back. But in many instances the Hebrew word is used to mean simply a turning, either of body or mind, without reference to the former position (Judg. 3 : 19; 1 Kings 13 : 33; 2 Kings 9 : 18; 23 : 25, 26; Isa. 5 : 25; 9 : 12, 13; 10 : 4, etc.) and some interpreters see in it a call to the maiden to turn, or whirl in the dance. Thus it is translated "Turn, turn," by Daland; "Turn about, turn about," by Curtiss, Oetli, Graetz, and others. The more usual Hebrew word for this would be חָזַק, *chuli*, instead of שׁוּב, *shubi*. The R. V. reads "Return," and accordingly our text assumes that Shulamith is withdrawing. But the following words of the women, "that we may look upon thee," and their immediate demand for "the dance of Mahanaim," give much force to the other view. **Why will ye look, etc.** Terry translates: "What will ye gaze at in the Shulamite?" and R. V. "Why will ye look upon the Sulamite as upon the dance of Mahanaim?" Graetz, "What would ye gaze at in the Shulamite as in a dancer of the doubleband dance?" We prefer to regard the suggestion of the dance as coming from the women, and as distasteful to the modest Shulamite. The women say, "We would look upon thee in the dance of Mahanaim." What this dance was can perhaps be best gathered from the description that follows, showing that the person of the dancer was freely exposed. Possibly there is a reference to the event recorded in Gen. 32 : 1-3, Mahanaim meaning, "two hosts, or camps," from which some semi-religious custom may have grown up in Mahanaim, well known as the dance of that place. Many commentators believe that the Shulamite actually danced, and that the description following is a description of her charms, as actually

## CHAPTER VII.

1 HOW beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.

2 Thy navel *is like* a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor; thy belly *is like* an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

3 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

4 Thy neck *is* as a tower of ivory; thine eyes *like* the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim; thy nose *is* as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.

5 Thine head upon thee *is* like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king *is* held in the galleries.

6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

8 I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;

9 And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine

1 HOW beautiful are thy feet in sandals, O prince's daughter!

The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a cunning workman.

2 Thy navel *is like* a round goblet, *Wherein* no mingled wine is wanting: Thy belly *is like* an heap of wheat Set about with lilies.

3 Thy two breasts are like two fawns That are twins of a roe.

4 Thy neck *is like* the tower of ivory; Thine eyes *as the* pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim;

Thy nose *is like* the tower of Lebanon Which looketh toward Damascus.

5 Thine head upon thee *is like* Carmel, And the hair of thine head like purple; The king *is held* captive in the tresses thereof.

6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree, And thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

8 I said, I will climb up into the palm tree, I will take hold of the branches thereof; Let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine, And the smell of thy breath like apples;

9 And thy mouth like the best wine,

displayed. With more refinement Griffis says: "The courtiers of Solomon, looking upon this living tableau of maidenly loveliness, declare that the young girl's airy, fairy motions remind them of Jacob's celestial visitants. The sight of her is that of angelic beauty and heavenly winsomeness, recalling the ascending and descending of the angels upon the ladder or stairs from earth to heaven." But the description that follows, which evidently is that of a person in the dance, whether the Shulamite danced or not, hardly accords with angelic comparisons. Better is it simply to understand that there was some dance connected with the place Mahanaim, as often with particular localities. Elisha was born at a place called "the meadow of dancing" (1 Kings 19 : 16), and Shiloh had a festival with dancing (Judg. 21 : 21). The mention of Ahinadab suggested Mahanaim and its dance. Eagerly the women urge Shulamith thus to display her charms. But it is inconceivable that the modest maiden did so. The description of her charms that follows is in the hope of inciting her to display them for their entertainment and in order that the king may be wrought up to the highest pitch of desire, and the tender Shulamith, whom the women hate as so superior to themselves, be subdued and degraded from her pinnacle of virtue, and brought to their own level.

As upon the dance, etc. The speech of the women, in answer to Shulamith's question.

Chap. 7. 1. Thy feet in sandals. Always in dancing the feet were bare. There is a keen mockery in the words, the brown feet of the

maiden, little like those of a prince's daughter, being beautiful only when half hidden in sandals! The king, like any other daft lover, hears the praise and misses the scorn. 2. Navel. The word thus translated occurs in this form, an active participle, only in this place. Wherever it is used for navel it is in another form. Daland reads, "Thy turnings are circular movements," and Griffis, "Thy round dances are perfect circles," the word translated "goblet" in A. V. and R. V., meaning properly a trough for washing by treading with the feet, and so any round vessel. But this would make a break in the poetic description of bodily beauty, the only exception of the whole passage. We may translate as follows: "Thy curves are like a perfect cup, wherein no mingled wine is wanting"; that is, a cup filled with rosy mixture, the whole signifying the rosy roundness of the youthful figure. 4. Pools in Heshbon, etc. Heshbon, formerly belonging to the Amorites, was a city of Solomon's kingdom, situated about five hours to the east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. Outside its gate still remain the ruins of a large reservoir, doubtless famous in its time. The gate Bath-rabbim means the gate of the daughter of multitudes, that is, of the populous city. 5. The king is held captive. With these words the women excite the king to the utmost. He interrupts their speech (ver. 6), and declares his purpose to take possession of this beautiful "palm tree." As he approaches her, saying, 9. Thy mouth like the best wine, ruddy, fragrant, satisfying, intoxicating, Shulamith glides quickly from him, and interrupts.

for my beloved, that goeth *down* sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

10 I *am* my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.

12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, *whether* the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

13 The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant *fruits*, new and old, *which* I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

That goeth down smoothly for my beloved,  
Gliding through the lips of those that are asleep.

10 I am my beloved's,

And his desire is toward me.

11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;  
Let us lodge in the villages.

12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;  
Let us see whether the vine hath budded, and  
its blossom be open,

And the pomegranates be in flower:

There will I give thee my love.

13 The mandrakes give forth fragrance,  
And at our doors are all manner of precious  
fruits, new and old,  
Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1 O THAT thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! *when* I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.

2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, *who* would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

3 His left hand *should* be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, until he please.

5 Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth *that* bare thee.

6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, *which* hath a most vehement flame.

7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned.

8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

9 If she be a wall, we will build upon her a pal-

1 OH that thou wert as my brother,

That sucked the breasts of my mother!

When I should find thee without, I would kiss  
thee;

Yea, and none would despise me.

2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house,

Who would instruct me:

I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine,  
Of the juice of my pomegranate.

3 His left hand *should* be under my head,  
And his right hand should embrace me.

4 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,  
Until it please.

5 Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,  
Leaning upon her beloved?

Under the apple tree I awakened thee:

There thy mother was in travail with thee,

There was she in travail that brought thee forth.

6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon  
thine arm:

For love is strong as death;

Jealousy is cruel as the grave:

The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,

A very flame of the Lord.

7 Many waters cannot quench love,

Neither can the floods drown it:

If a man would give all the substance of his  
house for love,

He would utterly be contemned.

8 We have a little sister,

And she hath no breasts:

What shall we do for our sister

In the day when she shall be spoken for?

9 If she be a wall,

We will build upon her a turret of silver:

**For my beloved.** All the satisfaction was for her lover, to whom she would yet be modestly true. **Gliding**, etc. Delitzsch translates: "Which makes the lips of sleepers move," as in delightful dreams. **10. I am my beloved's.** Thus she finally dismisses the appeals of the king and in the following lines once more turns in tender appeal to her absent lover.

**Chap. 8. 1. As my brother.** If he were her own brother her caresses, that she longs to bestow, would not be considered immodest. **4. I adjure you.** The final repetition of the refrain, expressing the lesson of the poem. Love must be natural and true, the holiest of human emotions.

**SIXTH DAY, 8 : 5-14. 5. Who is this, etc.** The king has left her, and she imagines herself set free, returned by the king's command to her home, and met by her lover outside of the village. To the end of ver. 7 the words are an amplification of the refrain, ver. 6 and 7 being an especially beautiful tribute to the strength and value of an undying affection. **8. We have a little sister.** Apparently Shulamith breaks out into a snatch of folk song, which celebrates the feeling of brothers with respect to the disposition in marriage of their sister, as yet a mere girl, of unmarriageable age. **9. If she be a wall, etc.** If she shows herself modest and repelling all advances,

acc of silver: and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.

10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

12 My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.

14 Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

And if she be a door,

We will enclose her with boards of cedar.

10 I am a wall, and my breasts like the towers thereof:

Then was I in his eyes as one that found peace.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon;

He let out the vineyard unto keepers;

Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

12 My vineyard, which is mine, is before me:

Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand,

And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens,

The companions hearken for thy voice:

Cause me to hear it.

14 Make haste, my beloved,

And be thou like to a roe or to a young hart

Upon the mountains of spices.

protecting herself from rude approach, then they would add to her defenses the honor and adornments of their brotherly care and affection. **If she be a door**, easily admitting those who seek her, immodest and yielding, then they will build cedar boards around her, to imprison and keep her pure by force. **10. I am a wall.** She has grown to a splendid maturity and been put to the severest test. And she proudly declares herself like the wall, unyielding, unbroken. Her maidenly charms stand untouched by any assault, and proud in the consciousness of virtue, though she had been tempted with the greatest offers that even a king could make. **In his eyes as one that found peace.** Perhaps in the eyes of her lover, who could find no fault in her (*Esther 2:17*); more likely, in the eyes of Solomon, who was at last overcome by her splendid virtue, and had relinquished her,

bestowing upon her thus a rarer gift than a participation in his throne, and giving to himself the unwonted sensation of self-control and reverence for such noble womanhood.

**11. A vineyard at Baalhamon.** A place near Dothan and not far from Shulem. Solomon gave his vineyard over to keepers, taking from them a rental; but the maiden has kept her vineyard, her person and love, in her own possession, tempted by no offers of gain.

**13. Thou that dwellest in the gardens.** Her lover, upon whom she calls in delighted anticipation, knowing that although she yet lingers in the palace she shall soon see him, and hear his voice to which others, more happy than she, already listen. **14. Upon the mountains of spices.** No longer the mountains of Bether, or separation, difficulty, but mountains of secluded and unalloyed delights.













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